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EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER

A. H. SAYCE, M. A.



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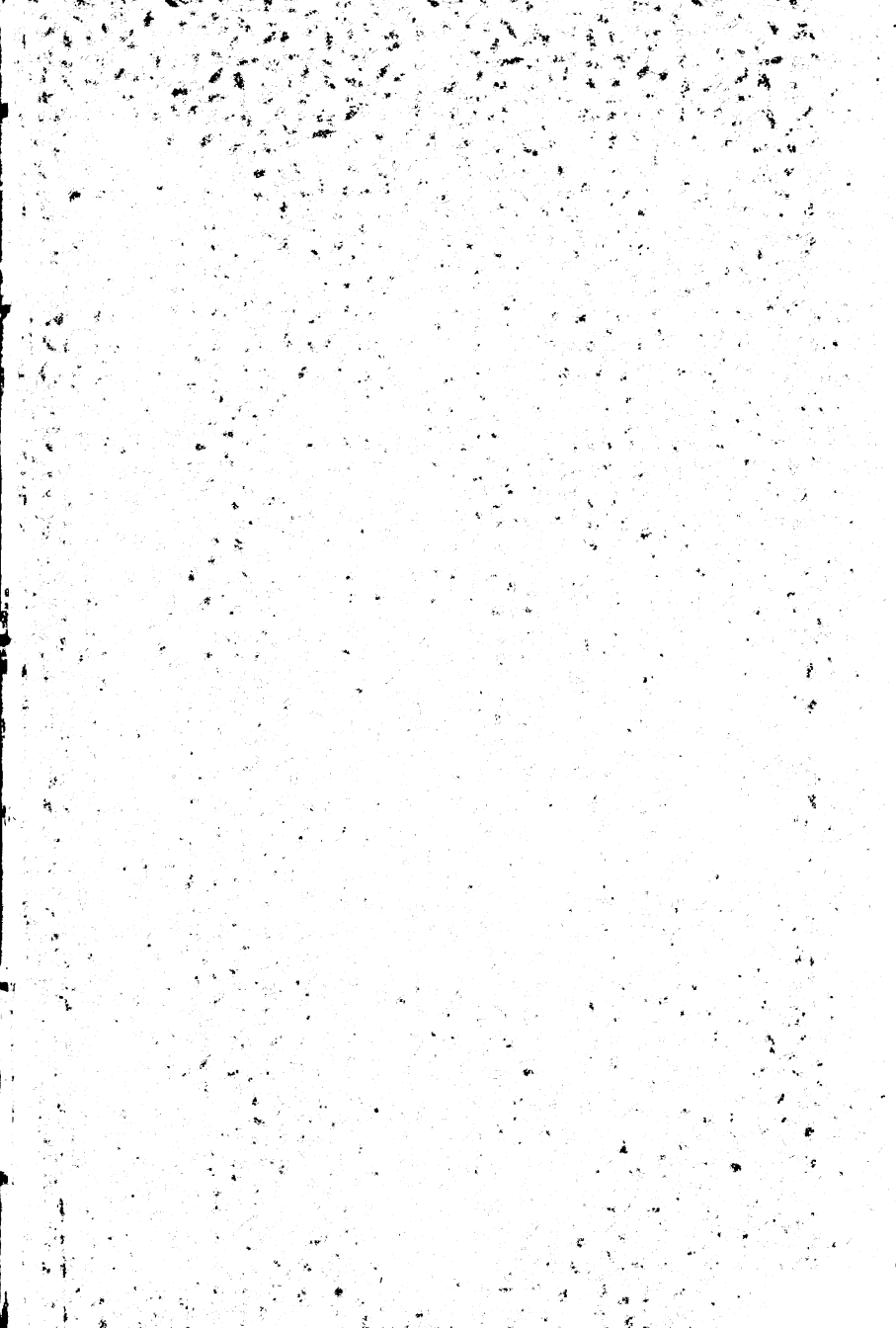


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AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE BOOKS OF
EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER.

BY

A. H. SAYCE, M.A.,

Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford; Hon. LL.D., Dublin,

AUTHOR OF 'FRESH LIGHT FROM THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS,' 'ASSYRIA: ITS PRINCES
PRIESTS AND PEOPLE,' 'THE HITTITES; OR, THE STORY OF A
FORGOTTEN EMPIRE,' ETC., ETC.

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P R E F A C E .

THE following pages will explain themselves. Their object is to set before the reader a brief but intelligible account of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, and a history of the times to which they belong. An endeavour has been made to omit nothing that calls for comment or explanation, and thus to present the Biblical student with a work that, while serving the purposes of a commentary, forms a continuous narrative, and is of manageable size. Its distinguishing peculiarity is the use made in it of recent monumental discoveries, more especially of the inscriptions of Cyrus; and the scholar will notice one or two illustrations of Holy Writ that are here given for the first time.

Those who wish for more detailed information regarding the newly-found records of the past, and the testimony they bear to the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures, may refer to the volumes entitled 'Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments,' 'Assyria: its Princes, Priests and People,' and 'The Hittites; or, the Story of a Forgotten Empire,' published by the Religious Tract Society.

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- 336. Darius III. Codomannus.
- 331. Persia conquered by Alexander the Great.

¹ So according to the cuneiform tablets. According to the Greek writers, Darius II. reigned nineteen years, and Artaxerxes II. forty-six (or forty-three) years.

CHAPTER I.

THE RETURN FROM THE CAPTIVITY.

THE prophets had predicted that the Jews should remain captive in Babylonia for seventy years. Nebuchadnezzar had followed the policy of the Assyrian kings in transporting conquered peoples, or at all events the upper classes among them, from their native homes. Thus the Israelitish inhabitants of Samaria had been carried to the banks of the Khabur and to the cities of Media, while their places were supplied by captives from Babylonia and Susiania. It was supposed that a conquered nation was in this way rendered harmless, and deprived of the opportunity to revolt. Torn from its old homes, and transplanted among an alien population, it had neither the motives nor the means to rebel.

This policy succeeded wherever the captive race had the inclination and the time to become absorbed into the people among whom it was settled. But when the captives refused to amalgamate with the stranger, and preserved a bitter memory of their conquest and enslaved condition, the policy was a most dangerous one. It was inevitable that the exiles would be continually on the look-out for deliverance and restoration, and might intrigue successfully at a critical moment with a foreign invader.

More especially was this likely to be the case when, as happened with the Jews, they were planted in the midst of the very people which had overthrown their independence, and thus had the sense of bondage perpetually before their eyes. It was no wonder that the Jewish exiles were ever sighing for the promised 'salvation,' and looked eagerly forward to God's 'Anointed One,' who should rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

The history of the downfall of the great Babylonian Empire, and of the causes, humanly speaking, which brought about the restoration of the Jews, has recently been revealed to us by the progress of Assyrian discovery. We now possess the account given by Cyrus himself, of the overthrow of Nabonidos, the Babylonian king, and of the conqueror's permission to the captives in Babylonia to return to their homes. The account is contained in two documents, written, like most other Assyrian and Babylonian records, upon clay, and lately brought from Babylonia to England by Mr. Rassam. One of these documents is a tablet which chronicles the events of each year in the reign of Nabonidos, the last Babylonian monarch, and continues the history into the first year of Cyrus, as king of Babylon. The other is a cylinder, on which Cyrus glorifies himself and his son Kambyzes, and professes his adherence to the worship of Bel-Merodach, the patron-god of Babylon.

The tablet-inscription is, unfortunately, somewhat mutilated, especially at the beginning and the end, and little can be made out of the annals of the first five years of Nabonidos, except that he was occupied

with disturbances in Syria. In the sixth year the record becomes clear and continuous. In this year, we are told, 'Astyages gathered [his army] and marched against Cyrus, king of Elam. But the soldiers of Astyages revolted from him, and seized him, and delivered him up to Cyrus. Cyrus [proceeded] to the land of Ekbatana, the royal city. The silver, the gold, the furniture, and the spoil of the land of Ekbatana he carried away, and brought the furniture and the spoil which he had taken to the land of Elam. The seventh year the king [Nabonidos] was in the town of Tema [a suburb of Babylon]. The king's son, the nobles, and his soldiers were in Accad [or Northern Babylonia]. The king did not go to Babylon, neither did Nebo nor Bel [-Merodach]. But they kept a festival; they sacrificed peace-offerings in the temples of Saggil and Zida to the gods for [the preservation] of Babylon and Borsippa. The governor inspected the garden and the temple. In the eighth year [no event took place]. The ninth year Nabonidos, the king, was in Tema; the king's son, the nobles, and his soldiers were in Accad. Until the month of Nisan [March] the king did not go to Babylon, neither did Nebo nor Bel. But they kept a festival; they sacrificed peace-offerings to the gods in the temples of Saggil and Zida for the preservation of Babylon and Borsippa. On the 5th day of Nisan, the king's mother, who was in the fortress of the camp on the river Euphrates, above Sippara, died. The king's son and his soldiers mourned for her three days running. In the month Sivan [May] there was a mourning for the king's mother throughout the land of

Accad. In the month Nisan, Cyrus, king of Persia, collected his soldiers and crossed the Tigris below Arbela, and the following month [marched] against the land of . . . Its king took [his] silver and himself ; he made his own children mount [the pyre] ; afterwards both king and children were [burnt] in the middle [of it]. The tenth year the king was in Tema ; the king's son, the officers, and his soldiers were in Accad. Until [Nisan] the king [did not go to Babylon], neither did Nebo nor Bel. But they kept the festival ; they sacrificed peace-offerings to the gods in the temples [of Saggil and Zida] for the preservation of Babylon and Borsippa. On the 21st day of Sivan [the soldiers] of Elam marched into Accad. A prefect [was appointed ?] in Erech. The eleventh year the king was in Tema ; the king's son, the nobles, and his soldiers were in Accad. Until Elul [August] the king did not come forth [to worship] Bel, but they kept the festival ; they sacrificed peace-offerings [to the gods in the temples of Saggil and Zida for the preservation of] Babylon and Borsippa.'

Here the tablet is broken, and when the record recommences it is in the seventeenth year of Nabonidos. The tribes on 'the Lower Sea,' or Persian Gulf, were now in revolt. Cyrus, after vainly trying to break through the Babylonian army in Accad (or Northern Babylonia), had occupied his time in intriguing with a disaffected party—probably the Jews—in the centre of Babylonia itself. When everything was ready for execution, he prepared to attack Babylonia from the south-east, where he would be assisted by the Elamite tribes of the coast. Nabonidos

in his despair turned to the gods for help. Their images were brought from their numerous shrines to Babylon, in the hope that their presence would protect the city from capture. 'The gods of Marad, Zamama, and the [other] gods of Kis, Beltis, and the [other] gods of Kharsak-kalama, were brought to Babylon; up to the end of Elul the gods of Accad, which are above and below the sky, were brought to Babylon; but the gods of Borsippa, of Cuthah, and of Sippara, were not brought. In the month Tammuz [June] Cyrus gave battle to the army of Accad in the town of Rutum, upon the river Nizallat. The men of Accad broke into revolt. On the 14th day [of the month] the garrison of Sippara was taken without fighting. Nabonidos flies. On the 16th day Gobryas, the governor of Gutium [Kurdistan], and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting. Afterwards he takes Nabonidos, and puts him into fetters in Babylon. Up to the end of the month Tammuz some rebels from Kurdistan kept the gates of the temple of Saggil closed; but there was nothing in the way of weapons in the temple of Saggil, nor was there an opportunity [of using them]. On the 3rd day of Marchesvan [October] Cyrus entered Babylon. The roads in his presence were full. He grants peace to the city; to the whole of Babylon Cyrus proclaims peace. Gobryas, his governor, was appointed over the [other] governors in Babylon, and from the month Chisleu [November] to the month Adar [February] the gods of Accad, whom Nabonidos had brought to Babylon, were being restored to their shrines. On the 11th day of the previous Marchesvan Gobryas [was appointed] over [Babylon], and the king

[Nabonidos] died. From the 27th of Adar to the 3rd of Nisan [there was] a mourning in Accad ; all the people smote their heads. On the 4th day Kam-byses, the son of Cyrus, arranged the burial in the temple of the Sceptre of the World. The priests of the temple of the Sceptre of Nebo went [to it].’ The rest of the text, which is very imperfect from this point, describes the honours paid by Cyrus and his son to the Babylonian gods, their sacrifices of victims to Bel-Merodach, and their restoration of Nebo to his old shrine.

The cylinder-inscription of Cyrus takes up the history at the point where the annalistic tablet leaves it. Cyrus here says that Nabonidos had neglected the service of the gods, who accordingly were angry with him. ‘The gods dwelling within them left their shrines in anger when [Nabonidos] brought them to Babylon. Merodach went about to all men wherever were their seats ; and the men of Sumer and Accad, whom he had sworn should attend him, [besought him to return]. The favour he granted ; he came back : all lands, even the whole of them, rejoiced and ate. And he sought after a king to guide aright in the heart what his hand upholds. Cyrus, king of Elam, he proclaimed by name for the sovereignty ; all men everywhere commemorate his name. The men of Kurdistan [Gutium] and all the army of the barbarians [Manda] of Ekbatana he made bow down to his feet ; the men of the black-headed race [the Accadians], whom he had conquered with his hand, he governed in justice and righteousness. Merodach, the great lord, the restorer of his people, beheld with joy the deeds of his vicegerent, who was righteous in

hand and heart. To his city of Babylon he summoned his march, and he bade him take the road to Babylon : like a friend and a comrade he went at his side. The weapons of his vast army, whose number, like the waters of a river, could not be known, were made ready, and he marshalled his forces. Without fighting or battle he caused him to enter into Babylon ; his city of Babylon feared ; in a place difficult of access, Nabonidos, the king, who worshipped him not, he gave into his hand. The men of Babylon all of them, [and] the whole of Sumer and Accad, the nobles and priests who had revolted, kissed his feet, they rejoiced in his sovereignty, their faces shone. The god who in his ministry raises the dead to life, who benefits all men in difficulty and prayer, has in goodness drawn nigh to him, has made strong his name. I am Cyrus, the king of Legions, the great king, the powerful king, the king of Babylon, the king of Sumer and Accad, the king of the four zones, the son of Kambyses the great king, the king of Elam ; the grandson of Cyrus the great king, the king of Elam ; the great-grandson of Teispes the great king, the king of Elam ; of the ancient seed-royal, whose rule has been beloved by Bel and Nebo, whose sovereignty they have cherished according to the goodness of their hearts. At that time I entered Babylon in peace. With joy and gladness in the palace of the kings I exalted the seat of my dominion. Merodach, the great lord, [cheered] the heart of his servant, whom the sons of Babylon [obeyed each] year and day. . . . My vast armies he marshalled peacefully in the midst of Babylon ; throughout Sumer and Accad I had no revilers. The

sanctuaries of Babylon and all its fortresses I established in peace. As for the sons of Babylon . . . their ruins I repaired, and I delivered their prisoners. For the work [of restoring the shrine] of Merodach, the great lord, I prepared, and he graciously drew nigh unto me, Cyrus, the king, his worshipper, and to Kambyases my son, the offspring of my heart, and to all my army, and in peace we duly restored its front [in] glory. All the kings who dwell in the high places of all regions from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, who dwell in [the high places] of the kings of Phœnicia and Sutar, all of them brought their rich tribute, and in the midst of Babylon kissed my feet. From [the city of] . . . to the cities of Assur and Istar . . . Accad, Marad, Zamban, Me-Turnat, and Duran, as far as the border of Kurdistan, the fortresses [which lie] upon the Tigris wherein from of old were their seats, I restored the gods who dwelt within them to their places, and I enlarged [for them] seats that should be long-enduring; all their peoples I assembled, and I restored their lands. And the gods of Sumer and Accad, whom Nabonidos, to the anger of the lord of gods [Merodach] had brought into Babylon, I settled in peace in their sanctuaries by the command of Merodach, the great lord. In the goodness of their hearts may all the gods whom I have brought into their strong places daily intercede before Bel and Nebo, that they should grant me length of days; may they bless my projects with prosperity, and may they say to Merodach my lord, that Cyrus, the king, thy worshipper, and Kambyases his son [deserve thy favour].'

The inscriptions just translated present us with an account of the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire, which is in many important respects very different from that handed down to us by classical writers. We possess in them the contemporaneous account of one who was the chief actor in the events he records, and have ceased to be dependent upon Greek and Latin writers, who could not read a single cuneiform character, and were separated by a long lapse of time from the age of Nabonidos and Cyrus. Perhaps the first fact which will strike the mind of the reader with astonishment is that Cyrus does not call himself and his ancestors kings of Persia, but of Elam. The word used is Anzan or Ansan, which an old Babylonian geographical tablet explains as the native name of the country which the Assyrians and Hebrews called Elam. This statement is verified by early inscriptions found at Susa and other places in the neighbourhood, and belonging to the ancient monarchs of Elam, who contended on equal terms with Babylonia and Assyria until they were at last conquered by the Assyrian king Assur-bani-pal, and their country made an Assyrian province. In these inscriptions they take the imperial title of 'king of Anzan.'

The annalistic tablet lets us see when Cyrus first became king of Persia. In the sixth year of Nabonidos (B.C. 549) Cyrus is still king of Elam; in the ninth year he has become king of Persia. Between these two years, therefore, he must have gained possession of Persia either by conquest or in some peaceable way. When he overthrew Astyages his rule did not as yet extend so far.

At the same time Cyrus must have been of Persian descent, since he traces his ancestry back to Teispes, whom Darius, the son of Hystaspes, in his great inscription on the sacred rock of Behistun, claims as his own forefather. Darius, however, asserts that his forefathers—Ariaramnes, the son of Teispes, Arsames and Hystaspes—had been kings; and as he further asserts that the sovereignty had been divided between two lines, it is probable that Teispes overran and established himself in Elam, where the elder branch of his family succeeded him, while the younger branch continued to govern in Persia. When Assyria began to decay, an outlying province like Elam would be at the mercy of the first invader; and the prophecy against Elam in Jeremiah xlix. 34-39 may refer to its conquest by Teispes. The fact that Susa or Shushan was the original capital of Cyrus explains why it remained the leading city of the Persian Empire; and we can also now understand why it is that in Isaiah xxi. 2, the prophet bids Elam and Media, and not Persia and Media, 'go up' against Babylon.

That Cyrus was an Elamite, however, is not the only startling revelation which the newly-discovered inscriptions have made to us. We learn from them that he was a polytheist who worshipped Bel-Merodach and Nebo, and paid public homage to the deities of Babylon. We have learnt a similar fact in regard to his son Kambyzes from the Egyptian monuments. These have shown us that the account of the murder of the sacred bull Apis by Kambyzes given by Herodotus is a fiction; a tablet accompanying the huge granite sarcophagus of the very bull he was

supposed to have wounded has been found with the image of Kambyzes sculptured upon it kneeling before the Egyptian god. The belief that Cyrus was a monotheist grew out of the belief that he was a Persian, and, like other Persians, a follower of the Zoroastrian faith; there is nothing in Scripture to warrant it. Cyrus was God's shepherd only because he was His chosen instrument in bringing about the restoration of Israel; it is expressly said of him, 'I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me' (Isaiah xlv. 5). The captivity of Bel and Nebo (Isaiah xlvi. 1, 2) means necessarily nothing more than that the people whose gods they were had passed under the yoke of a foreign conqueror.

The siege of Babylon, of which we read in Herodotus, must, it would seem, have belonged, not to the reign of Cyrus, but to that of Darius Hystaspes. Twice during the reign of Darius did Babylon revolt, and it was twice taken after a long siege. We have the express testimony of Cyrus himself that the city opened its gates to his general 'without fighting or battle;' and the Greek writer must therefore have transferred an event which belonged to the reign of Darius to the earlier reign of Cyrus. The whole account of the conquest of Babylonia, however, given by Herodotus and repeated from him by subsequent historians, is full of errors. Thus we know that the final march of Cyrus against Nabonidos was made from the south-east, and not from the north, as indeed might already have been gathered from Isaiah xxi. 2; so that the supposed references to a march from the north which commentators have discovered in

the prophecies of Isaiah must be interpreted in a different way.¹

'The king's son,' who commanded the Babylonian army in the camp at Sippara or Sepharvaim (now Abu-Habba) was, no doubt, Belshazzar, whom Nabonidos mentions in one of his inscriptions as his eldest son. The annalistic tablet does not tell us what became of him; for this we must go to the Book of Daniel. His father, Nabonidos, however, was not sent as governor to Karmania, as, according to Josephus, had been stated by Berosus; after being dragged from his hiding-place, he was thrown into chains in Babylon, and four months afterwards died at a very convenient moment for his conqueror, who had entered Babylon in triumph eight days previously. The first work of Cyrus was to ingratiate himself with the conquered population by affecting a show of zeal and piety towards their gods, and with the nations which had been kept in captivity in Babylonia, by sending them and their deities back to their homes. Among these nations were the Jews, who had perhaps assisted the king of Elam in his attack upon Nabonidos.

Experience had taught Cyrus the danger of allowing a disaffected people to live in the country of their conquerors. He therefore reversed the old policy of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, which consisted in transporting the larger portion of a conquered population to another country, and sought instead to win their gratitude and affection by allowing them to return to their native lands. He saw,

¹ For further details see *Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments*, pp. 174 sq.

moreover, that the Jews, if restored from exile, would not only protect the south-western corner of his empire from the Egyptians, but would form a base for his intended invasion of Egypt itself. The permission, therefore, which he granted to the Jewish exiles to return again to Palestine, and there rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, doubtless seemed to him a master-stroke of policy ; he little knew that he was but an instrument in the hand of God, who was using him and his worldly-wise counsels to fulfil the promises that had been made years before to the chosen people.

The nations who had borne the yoke of slavery in Babylonia along with the Jews, when allowed to leave the land of their captivity, took back with them their native gods. The Jews alone had no images to take ; the bitter lesson of the exile had at last eradicated idolatry from the hearts of all those at any rate who were ready to avail themselves of the permission to return. What they carried with them, therefore, were only 'the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods.' These were delivered to Sheshbazzar, 'the prince of Judah,' by the treasurer Mithridates, a well-known Persian name, which means 'given to Mithra,' the Sun-god. Sheshbazzar has been supposed to be Zerubbabel. At any rate, both Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel are Babylonian names, the latter signifying 'the seed of Babylon.'

The number of exiles who took advantage of the edict of Cyrus, and accompanied Zerubbabel to Jerusalem, amounted to 42,360.¹ It is probable, however,

¹ Ezra ii. 64 ; Neh. vii. 66.

that this means only the heads of families ; if so, the whole body of those who left Babylon, including women and children, would have been about 200,000.¹ A considerable number of them were priests ; indeed, while only seventy-four Levites returned to Judæa, more than 4,000 priests did so.² It is impossible not to see in this disproportion a larger amount of faith in God's promises among the 'sons of Aaron' than among the lower grade of ministers in the sanctuary. Even the Nethinim and 'the children of Solomon's servants,' descendants though they were of the old Canaanitish inhabitants of the land, were far more numerous than the Levites.³ The Levites, as a body, preferred to remain in the country of their exile ; why they did so we have no means of knowing.

The return from the captivity took place in the first year of the reign of Cyrus in Babylonia, that is, in 538 B.C. The journey of so large a caravan from Babylonia to Palestine must have occupied a considerable time : that of Nehemiah and his companions took as much as four months. They travelled along what was afterwards called the Royal Road. It led them by the banks of the Tigris, past the mounds which marked the desolate site of Nineveh, and the ancient city of Haran, with its temple of the Moon-god, which had been recently half destroyed by barbarian invaders, to the ford over the Euphrates that had once been commanded by the Hittite capital, Carchemish. From thence the exiles must have turned to the south by the way of Aleppo and

¹ Sennacherib claims to have carried away 200,150 persons from Judah after his campaign against Hezekiah.

² Ezra ii. 40 ; ii. 36-39. Neh. vii. 39-42.

³ Ezra ii. 58.

Hamath, and so at last have found themselves again in their own land, amid the blackened ruins of Jerusalem.

It was on the first day of Tisri, or September, that 'the people gathered themselves together as one man in Jerusalem,' and rebuilt the altar of burnt-offerings. The temple still remained in ruin, but money was freely contributed for its restoration, and Phœnician workmen, like those Solomon had employed five centuries before, were fetched from Sidon and Tyre. Stone was at hand in the quarried recesses of the temple-hill itself, but the wood had to be brought from the mountain range of Lebanon, where cedar trees were cut down, and the logs transported by sea to Joppa. Joppa, or Jaffa, is still the seaport of the modern Jerusalem.

The work of restoration proved long and wearisome. The foreign tribes who had been settled in Samaria, and had there mingled their idolatrous rites with the worship of the God of Israel, claimed to take part in it, on the ground that they too were inhabitants of the country, and were therefore under the protection of the national god. The Jews refused their aid, and thus that long feud began between Judah and Samaria which was only ended by the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

The Samaritans professed that they had sacrificed unto the God of Israel ever 'since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assur,' who had brought them into their new homes;¹ and they are described as consisting of 'the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Baby-

¹ Ezra iv. 2.

lonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites, and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria.'¹ Din was a town in Elam; and the Apharsites seem to have been the inhabitants of the plain of Mal-Amir, in the eastern part of that country. The Archevites were the people of Erech, now Warka, one of the Babylonian cities mentioned in Gen. x. 10, while the Susanchites were the natives of Susa. Susa had been captured and burnt by Assur-bani-pal, the son and successor of Esar-haddon; and it is probable that Asnapper is merely the Persian form of his name. It would therefore appear that three different importations of foreign tribes into the territory of Samaria had been made by the Assyrian kings; the first being that described in 2 Kings xvii., which seems to have been effected shortly after the overthrow of Samaria by Sargon, the conqueror of Hamath, Babylon, and Sepharvaim; while the second was brought about by his grandson Esar-haddon, and the third by Assur-bani-pal. The second may be referred to by Isaiah when he declares (vii. 8) that 'within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.' The threescore and five years would have ended B.C. 669, the year before Esar-haddon's death; and Esar-haddon's colonization of the country implies that a revolt in Samaria had been suppressed by him.

¹ Ezra iv. 9, 10.

² R in Assur might become n, as in Nebuchad~~ne~~zzar, instead of Nebuchad~~re~~zzar (Nabiu-kudurra-utzur), and the Persian was apt to turn l into r, writing *Bābiru*, for example, in place of Babilu or Babylon. Hence Assur-bani-pal might pass into Asn-(ba)ni-par.

It was little wonder that the Jews should have indignantly rejected the companionship of a population so mixed and impure both in race and religion as that of Samaria. Perhaps, too, it was only natural that those whose claims to represent the older inhabitants of the country had been refused should have henceforth done their best to 'weaken the hands of the people of Judah, and trouble them in building.' We are told that their opposition lasted from the days of Cyrus to the reigns of Darius, Ahasuerus, and Artaxerxes.¹ The statement has caused some difficulty to commentators, since Ahasuerus, or rather Akhasvêrosh, is the Hebrew form of Xerxes—the Persian Khshayârshâ—and Darius would therefore be Darius Hystaspes, Ahasuerus being his son Xerxes, and Artaxerxes Longimanus his grandson. On the other hand, Artaxerxes Longimanus did not come to the throne until B.C. 465, that is, sixty-four years after the death of Cyrus; and it has been urged that Zerubbabel and Joshua, the priests who accompanied the exiles from Babylonia, were present at the dedication of the second temple in the sixth year of Darius (B.C. 515). This, however, was only fourteen years after the death of Cyrus; and the whole difficulty may be solved by considering that the account given in Ezra iv. 6-23 is episodical, and refers merely to the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem, and not to the restoration of the temple. In strict chronological order the twenty-fourth verse of the chapter would then follow immediately after the fifth—as, indeed, is indicated by the grammatical construction

¹ Ezra iv. 5-7.

of the original Chaldee. The episode which has been inserted between the two verses would thus belong to the time when Ezra first came to Jerusalem. The chief care of the returning exiles was the restoration of the temple; the rebuilding of the walls was a matter of secondary importance to them; and they had the satisfaction of eventually seeing their wishes realised, and of taking part in the dedication of the house of God 'with joy.'¹

The Persian Empire was organised after the model of the second Assyrian Empire; its provinces being placed under satraps or governors who were appointed by the king, while the smaller districts were administered by *pakhôth* or rulers. The satrap corresponded to a modern Turkish Pasha; the Pekhah, or ruler, resembling the Kaimakam, or governor of a district, and in some cases the Mudir, or sub-governor. The word Pekhah was of Assyrian origin, the Assyrian title of the governor of a province being *pikhatu*; and it was borrowed from the Assyrians by the Jews. Its Persian equivalent seems to have been Tirshatha; at all events, not only is Nehemiah called 'the Tirshatha' but Zerubbabel is called so too (Ez. ii. 63; Neh. vii. 65, 70), though elsewhere his title is *pekhah* (Ez. v. 14; Hag. i. 1, 14). The exact meaning of Tirshatha, however, is doubtful; Rawlinson thinks it might be a Persian word *tarsâta*, 'the feared one;' Spiegel, that it is an Armenian compound, *tîr-sât*,

¹ The words 'and Artaxerxes, king of Persia,' in Ezra vi. 14, are also thought to be episodic, and to refer to the fact that the whole task of rebuilding Jerusalem was not 'finished' until the reign of Artaxerxes. The insertion of the italic 'it' after the word 'finished,' in the Authorised Version, is misleading, since it confines the work of building to the temple only.

'lord of the province.' In any case it does not appear to have a Semitic etymology. For the sake of clearness, we shall henceforth speak of the governor of a province as a 'satrap,' and translate *pekhah* and Tirshatha by 'governor.'

We learn from the prophet Haggai that Zerubbabel was sent by Cyrus with the returning exiles as 'governor of Judæa.' The satrap to whom he was immediately responsible was the satrap of Syria, whose authority extended from Cilicia on the north to the frontiers of Egypt on the south. Whether, however, the satrapy had been definitely established at the time when Zerubbabel and his companions returned to Jerusalem, is questionable, since Cyrus speaks of 'the kings of Phœnicia' and the adjoining regions in the very inscription in which he records his permission to the exiles to return to their old homes. At the same time, what he says shows plainly enough that the whole of Syria already admitted the supremacy of the Persian king, and settles the date to which we must refer the submission of the Phœnician cities. At the beginning of the reign of Darius, Tatnai was 'satrap on the further' or western 'side of the river,' Euphrates, Shethar-boznai the Apharsachite being governor of Samaria (Ez. v. 3, 6 ; vi. 6). Neither Tatnai nor Shethar-boznai seem to be Persian names. The latter may be Elamite ; the former Aramean. The Persian king not unfrequently selected a satrap from among the members of an old royal family belonging to the province over which he was appointed ; and if Tatnai were really of Syrian origin, it would account for his hostility to Jerusalem and the Jews.

On the death of Zerubbabel, Judæa apparently fell

under the domination of strangers. No attempt was made to rebuild the walls of the Jewish capital, or to set up its gates ; foreigners and heathen lived in Jerusalem, and even married into the priestly families ; and Tobiah, the Ammonite, the secretary (probably) of Sanballat, not only bore a Jewish name, compounded with that of the God of Israel, but had an apartment in the temple assigned to him by the high-priest himself. It is probable that the episode mentioned in Ez. iv. 7-23 belongs chronologically to the period between the end of the Book of Ezra and the opening of that of Nehemiah (B.C. 457-445), and explains the information brought by Hanani that 'The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach : the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire' (Neh. i. 3). The letter of Artaxerxes which Ezra carried with him did not go beyond giving orders for providing funds for the temple and its service, and for remitting taxation to the priests and other ministers of the house of God. But it was natural that when Ezra had finished his work of reorganising the temple-service, and of reforming the Jewish community, he, and those who had supported him, should think of restoring the fortifications of the holy city, and thus securing the temple against the attacks of its enemies. It was then that their adversaries interfered and represented to the Persian monarch that the Jews were making preparations for revolt. 'In the days of Artaxerxes,' we are told (Ez. iv. 7), 'wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes, king of Persia ; and the letter was

written in Aramaic characters, and translated into Aramaic' (as the verse should properly be rendered). Instead of the proper name, Bishlam, the Septuagint and Syriac versions translate, with more probability, 'in peace;' in this case, Mithredath, or Mithridates, would have been the Persian satrap of Syria, and Tabeel his scribe or secretary. At all events, Tabeel is an Aramaic name signifying 'Good is God,' and, it will be remembered, was borne by the father of the man whom Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel wished to seat as a vassal prince on the throne of David (Is. vii. 6).

This letter was followed by another from the governor of Samaria (Ez. iv. 17). The governor at this time was Rehum, whose title, rendered 'chancellor' in the Authorised Version, has been explained by the Assyrian inscriptions. It signified 'lord of official intelligence,' or 'postmaster,' the word *dl'êm* being the technical word used by the Assyrians and Babylonians to denote the regular reports forwarded to the king by his official correspondents abroad. Shimshai, 'he that belongs to the Sun-god,' was Rehum's secretary, and the letter he transcribed artfully suggested that if search were to be made in the imperial archives it would be found that Jerusalem had been destroyed on account of the turbulent character of its inhabitants, who were now again attempting to 'set up' its walls. The result was that Rehum and his companions 'went up in haste to Jerusalem,' and made the Jews cease their work of building. We may perhaps infer from this that the governor of Samaria claimed jurisdiction over Jerusalem and Judæa, Samaria being at this period not

only enclosed by walls, but also the most important city in Palestine.

However this may be, Nehemiah's narrative seems to imply that when he arrived at Jerusalem, Sanballat the Horonite was one of 'the governors beyond the river' (Neh. ii. 9, 10), and that he had his residence at Samaria (Neh. iv. 2). Sanballat is an Assyro-Babylonian name, signifying 'The Moon-god gives life,' from which we may conclude that Sanballat was descended from one of the Babylonian families who had been settled in Samaria. As Nehemiah calls his abettor and secretary (see Neh. vi. 17), Tobiah the Ammonite, a 'slave,' it would seem that Tobiah had been originally bought by Sanballat, but had subsequently risen to a position of dignity and influence in his master's house. In his attempt to prevent the Jews from fortifying their city Sanballat was assisted by the Ashdodites, and more especially by Gashmu, or Geshem, an Arabian sheikh (Neh. iv. 7). By these Arabians we must understand the Arab tribes in the southern part of Judah. All this goes to show that Sanballat's authority extended over the whole of Palestine. The arrival of Nehemiah naturally offended him, as the latter came as Tirshatha, or governor of a portion of the territory which had hitherto paid him tribute, and he therefore laid a plot to assassinate his Jewish rival (Neh. vi. 2-14), and did his utmost to prevent another fortified capital from rising in the neighbourhood of Samaria. His plots and efforts, however, were of no avail; armed with the king's missives, Nehemiah went on steadily with his work; and before very long Jerusalem was once more surrounded with a line of embattled wall.

On this occasion the Samaritan governor received no assistance from the šatrap of Syria ; the official position of Nehemiah and the letters he brought from Artaxerxes secured him against open hostility and public opposition. When the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem was celebrated, the restoration from the Babylonian exile was at length fully complete ; the captives had been released, the temple had been rebuilt, and Jerusalem was again a populous and a fortified city. As God had promised to His captive people long before : 'The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee : for in My wrath I smote thee, but in My favour have I had mercy on thee.'¹

¹ Is. lx. 10.

CHAPTER II.

THE BOOKS OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

IN the canon of the Jewish Church the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah were treated as a single work. Origen, in the third century of our era, was the first Christian writer who deviated from the tradition of the Jewish Church, and divided the volume into two parts, which he calls the First and Second Books of Esdras. But it is not till we come to Jerome, in his Epistle to Paulinus, that we find the second part definitely called the Book of Nehemiah.

There can be no doubt, however, that the two books, though relating to the same period of history, and even covering to some extent the same ground, are yet separate works belonging to different authors. Each has a style of its own, and contains words and expressions peculiar to itself. Nehemiah, for example, is distinguished by the parenthetical prayers introduced into the narrative here and there. On the other hand, there is a considerable resemblance between Ezra and the Books of Chronicles: we find in each the same phrases, the same partiality for genealogical lists, the same prominence given to the Levites and to the externals of religion, the same deep sense of the sins of the Jewish people. The resemblance, in fact, is so great as to have made some critics

ascribe to Ezra the composition of the Books of Chronicles, and appeal in support of their view to the legend in the apocryphal Book of Esdras (2 Esd. xiv. 21-46) that Ezra and his five companions re-wrote the Law, as well as to the Talmudic tradition that the books of the Old Testament were arranged by Ezra and 'the men of the great synagogue.'

It has been questioned whether Ezra and Nehemiah composed the whole of each of the two books which go under their names. It has been contended that the Book of Ezra is a compilation, only parts of which, such as the last four chapters, come from the pen of Ezra himself. Much stress has been laid on the interchange of the first and second personal pronouns in the second part of the book, from the seventh chapter to the end. The fact, too, that some portions of the work are written in Chaldee and other portions in Hebrew has been used as an argument against the unity of authorship ; and attempts have been made to show that a contradiction exists between the fourth chapter and those which follow. But it has already been pointed out that the contents of the fourth chapter, when rightly interpreted, are in entire harmony with the rest of the book ; and the general unity of style and conception which pervades the whole work makes it difficult to believe that the chief actor in the events it records was not also the writer of the entire book in which they are embodied. Indeed, it is denied by no one that a certain portion of the book (vii. 27-ix. 15) at any rate is the composition of Ezra himself ; and it is just as little denied that the materials of which the book is composed were put together in their present shape by a single

compiler. No valid reasons have been alleged why this single compiler should not have been Ezra 'the scribe.' The style of the portions which are admitted to belong to him agrees with that which we find elsewhere in the book; and it is no argument to say that he would not have spoken of himself in the third person. Other historians and writers have done so; in fact, one who had taken a leading part in the events he describes would naturally fall into an impersonal mode of referring to himself.

The case stands otherwise when we come to the Book of Nehemiah. Here we have mention made of Jaddua (xii. 11, 22), who was high-priest in the time of Alexander the Great, a century after the age of Nehemiah, as well as of Darius Codomannus (B.C. 336-331), the last king of Persia. He is called 'Darius the Persian,' as if the Persian Empire had ceased to exist when the passage was written. It is therefore evident that the book in its present form does not come entirely from the hand of Nehemiah. When we proceed to analyze it, we find that it falls into four main portions. The first seven chapters contain a continuous narrative, written, as is allowed by all critics, by Nehemiah himself. Then comes a section consisting of three chapters (viii.-x.), the style and language of which differ materially from that of ~~the rest of the book~~. Those who wish to see the evidence for this may refer to the *Speaker's Commentary*, where the principal points of difference are given in detail. In this section Nehemiah is spoken of under his Persian title of Tirshatha, and Ezra rather than Nehemiah occupies the most prominent place. It is on this account that the section has been

assigned by some commentators to Ezra, though it contains expressions so different from those used by the latter as to make it impossible that he could have been the author of them. The writer, moreover, must have been a layman and not a priest like Ezra, since he classes himself with 'the people' (x. 32, 37, 38).

③ The third section of the book includes the eleventh chapter and the first twenty-six verses of the twelfth.

This is made up of six lists, the first of which recounts the inhabitants of Jerusalem and their rulers in Nehemiah's time, and was therefore no doubt incorporated by Nehemiah himself into his work.

✓ The fourth and last section begins with the twenty-seventh verse of the twelfth chapter, and extends to the end of the book. Like the first, this section was composed by Nehemiah, and describes the successful completion of his labours at Jerusalem after his second visit to his native land. But the second section, and some at least of the lists given in the third section, seem to have been added to Nehemiah's memoirs by another hand, which also prefixed to the whole book the heading: 'The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.' How far this was done in Nehemiah's lifetime, or how far the work was left to be completed during the high-priesthood of Jaddua, is a matter of speculation about which no definite conclusion is possible.

Both Ezra and Nehemiah made use of official documents. The Book of Ezra begins with the decree of Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, and it embodies the letters of Rehum and Tatnai, and the answers of Artaxerxes and Darius, all of which were doubtless written in

Aramaic. The decree of Cyrus must have been treasured up by the Jews, as Canon Rawlinson remarks, 'as the charter of their liberties,' and since the correspondence which passed between the Persian kings and the governors 'beyond the river' was official, it would not have been difficult to procure copies of it. Among the contents of the library of Nineveh, now in the British Museum, are copies of the official letters received by the Assyrian king from generals in the field and provincial governors, as well as of the correspondence carried on between himself and foreign princes. The letters quoted by Ezra were of supreme importance to the Jewish colony in Jerusalem, and copies of them would naturally be preserved in the archives along with the decree of Cyrus.

Besides these State documents, which related to the Jews in so far as they formed part of the Persian Empire, the archives contained others which concerned only the Jewish community itself. These were the lists of the vessels restored by Cyrus to the temple-service, of the numbers and families of those who returned from exile, together with their servants and cattle, and of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the country-towns at subsequent periods when a census of the population was taken. The important 'register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first' with Zerubbabel is twice given, once by Ezra (ii.), and again by Nehemiah (vii.), who tells us that he 'found' it, no doubt in the record-chamber of the temple. Under Nehemiah another census was taken, the results of which are given in the eleventh chapter of his book. The census was necessitated by the changes that had taken place since the return under

Zerubbabel nearly a century previously, and signaled the completion of the reforms which Nehemiah had effected. The official register of it, so far as it embraced Jerusalem, was employed by the chronicler (1 Chron. ix. 3-22), and a comparison of the two accounts in Nehemiah and Chronicles shows us that the adult population of Jerusalem, exclusive of the Nethinim or temple-servants, amounted at the time to over 3,000, implying a total population of from 13,000 to 15,000. Amongst these were 1,192 (or, according to the chronicler, 1,760) priests and 284 Levites. Lists of the priests and Levites were also made out from time to time and duly recorded in 'the chronicles' (Neh. xii. 23), or State archives. Extracts from them, belonging respectively to the time of the high-priest Joshua, of his son Joiakim, and of his successors Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan (or Jonathan), and Jaddua, are quoted in Neh. xii.

The period at which the two books were composed can be easily fixed. Ezra the priest, who traced his descent to Aaron, and 'was a ready scribe in the law of Moses' (Ez. vii. 6), went up from Babylon to Judæa in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, *i.e.*, B.C. 458, and his narrative extends over the space of an entire year. Since we learn from the Book of Nehemiah that fourteen years later he was still holding an influential position in Jerusalem, it is clear that his work must have been written either in B.C. 457, or very shortly afterwards. As we have seen, it is only the latter part of the book that is occupied with an account of his own mission; most of the earlier part treats of events that happened sixty years before, when Zerubbabel was governor, and

Joshua high-priest, and when Zechariah and Haggai were delivering their prophecies. For this part, consequently, he must have made use not only of the official lists and letters already referred to, but also of a narrative written by one of the contemporaries of Zerubbabel. Who this was it is vain for us to inquire; all we can determine is that the Book of Ezra, as we have it, was compiled by 'the scribe' about B.C. 457, and that it embodies a narrative the date of which may be assigned to about B.C. 515, the year in which the rebuilding of the temple was completed.

Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah, on the other hand, did not begin to write until after his second visit to Jerusalem, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, B.C. 433-2. This is evident from the fact that he mentions the thirty-second year of the Persian king (v. 14) in the middle of his account of his first visit, which extended from B.C. 445 to 433. He had been the cup-bearer of Artaxerxes, and had not therefore been trained in the literary profession like Ezra. The anxieties and duties of his first twelve years of office as governor of Judæa would have left him but little leisure for writing, and it is consequently not surprising that he should have refrained from describing the history of his work until it was successfully accomplished. Hence we may assign B.C. 430 as the approximate date at which the Book of Nehemiah was composed, exclusive, that is, of the additions which were made to it in the time of the high-priest Jaddua, about a century later.

Unlike the Book of Ezra, the Book of Nehemiah is written throughout in Hebrew. In the Book of Ezra, the so-called Chaldee is used as well, not only

the letter of Artaxerxes (iv. 17-22), but also the whole narrative from iv. 8 to vi. 18 being in this language. What is termed Chaldee is really an Aramean dialect, and the word 'Syriac' employed in the Authorised Version would be a more accurate description of it. The term 'Chaldee' is derived from the belief that it represented the language of Babylonia, which the Jews are supposed to have adopted during the exile. The decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions has shown that this was not the case. The language of Babylonia was the same as that of Assyria, and was as far removed as Hebrew from the so-called Chaldee. In fact, Assyrian resembled Hebrew much more than it resembled 'Chaldee.' Chaldee, or Aramaic, as we ought to term it, was really spoken by the Aramean tribes of Syria and Mesopotamia, some of whom extended as far south as the frontiers of Babylonia itself. After the decay of the Phœnician cities in the days of the second Assyrian Empire, Carchemish, the old Hittite capital, became the chief centre of trade in Western Asia, and commerce passed in large measure into the hands of Aramean merchants. Hence it was that Aramaic became the language of trade,—a *lingua Franca*, in short, that was understood wherever mercantile transactions were carried on. Already in the time of Tiglath-Pileser II., contracts at Nineveh had Aramaic dockets attached to them, and a knowledge of Aramaic came to be a necessary part of a 'gentleman's' education. The result was that, like French in the modern world, Aramaic became the language of diplomacy as well as of trade. When the Rab-Shakeh was sent by Sennacherib against Jerusalem,

Hezekiah's ministers asked him to deliver his insulting message in Aramaic, which they understood, and assumed that a politician like himself would understand also, rather than in Hebrew, every word of which was intelligible to the uneducated classes of Jerusalem (2 Kings xviii. 26). After the destruction of the Jewish State and the captivity of its people, the Hebrew language had a hard struggle to maintain its existence. In Babylonia the Jews were forced to learn either Assyrian, or the mutually intelligible Aramaic, in order to be understood by their masters; and as many of them were in trade, while the better educated were already acquainted with Aramaic, the latter language was the one which was naturally preferred. It was only among themselves that Hebrew continued to be used, and it may be easily conceived how difficult it must have been for a small body of exiles to maintain their native tongue in the midst of strangers. It is not wonderful, therefore, that when the period of the exile was over, the greater part of the Jews had forgotten their mother-speech. Such, at least, seems to be the inference from Neh. viii, 8, where it is said that the Levites 'read in the Book of the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused [the people] to understand the reading.' This implies that the Hebrew original was not understood without a gloss or explanation. According to Jewish tradition, the Targum is referred to, which explained the words of the Law by means of an Aramaic paraphrase.

When Hebrew ceased to be spoken altogether is a question which we have no materials for answering. The priests and Levites, and, in fact, the upper

classes generally, necessarily understood the language of their sacred book and ritual, which it became the duty of the scribes to expound and interpret. According to Neh. xiii. 23, 24, the children of the Jews who had married foreign wives 'spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.' Unfortunately we do not know what 'the Jews' language' was at the time, whether it was Hebrew or Aramaic. Considering, however, how large a proportion of the returned exiles belonged to the priestly order, we might presume that Hebrew would still be used in the upper ranks of the community, and this presumption is borne out by the fact that nearly all the post-exilic books are in the old language of Israel. On the whole, it seems most probable that the Hebrew of the Old Testament did not become wholly extinct as a living tongue until contact with the Greeks had introduced another rival to it in the shape of Greek. A knowledge of Greek became fashionable in the higher society of Judæa, and just as Aramaic had long been the language of the lower classes, so Greek tended to be the language of the upper classes. Hebrew disappeared before the influence of Aramaic and Greek, just as completely as Aramaic and Greek themselves have since disappeared in Palestine before the influence of Arabic.

Long before this happened, Old Testament Hebrew had naturally become filled with 'Aramaisms,'—that is, with words or forms of words and expressions which were borrowed from Aramaic. But besides these, we should expect to find other words intro-

duced from Babylonian, and, after the rise of the Persian Empire, from Persian also. Our expectation is justified, for we find both. It is indeed only within the last few years that the Babylonian words have been detected ; but several of those formerly supposed to be of Persian origin now turn out to have really come from Babylonia. Let us take a few examples of them from the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. There is, first, the word *iggereth*, which is translated 'letter.' In the most recently published Hebrew Lexicon this is still regarded as of Persian derivation ; it is really, however, the Assyro-Babylonian *egirtu*, which is of common occurrence in the despatch-tablets. The letter sent by the Assyrian officer to the government at home is called an *egirtu*, like the letter in which the king or his vizier replies to it. Such letters were required to be sent at regular intervals from special commissioners, who were despatched into different parts of the empire, and for whose sake a sort of postal service was established. The reports furnished by them were termed *dhemi*, and this is the very word which is used in connection with Rehum, who is entitled *b'él-dh'ém*, or 'master of official news.' The office he held was probably that of the Persian official whom the Greek writers call a 'royal scribe,' and whose duty it was to furnish the king with a regular account of the conduct of the satraps, and the condition of the provinces under their authority.

Another word which has until now been believed to be Persian is 'daric,' which the Greeks borrowed under the form of *δαρεϊκός*, and the Jews under that of *darchemon* and *adarchon*. In the Authorised

Version it is rendered 'dram,' or 'drachm,' and was a word which was certainly used by the Persians. But it is now clear that the Persians received it from the Babylonians, like the Jews and the Greeks. A Babylonian contract-tablet dated in the twelfth year of Nabonidos, five years before the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, mentions the word *dariku* in the sense apparently of a certain measure. The 'daric,' therefore, cannot have taken its name from Darius, as has been supposed, but was originally a Babylonian measure or weight, which, like the English 'pound,' afterwards came to denote a coin. It may be added that, according to Mr. Pinches, coined money was already known to the Babylonians in the reign of Nabonidos, and was called *nukhkhut* by them.

Among the Persian words which we find in Ezra and Nehemiah is the word 'satrap,' the Old Persian *khshatrapâvan*, which is derived from *khshatra*, 'a crown,' and *pâ*, 'to protect.' The satrap, accordingly, was 'the protector of the crown,' the governor of the distant province who prevented the outbreak of disaffection or rebellion, and saw that the authority of the crown was not injured. The Hebrew form of the word is *akhashdarpan*, and it is met with not unfrequently in the post-exilic books.

Another word of Persian origin is *gizbar*, translated 'treasurer' in Ez. i. 8 and vii. 21. It is a compound of the Persian *bâra* 'bearer,' and *gaza* 'treasure,' and thus means literally 'the bearer of treasure.' *Gaza*, under the form of *genaz*, occurs several times in Ezra and Esther; and the word *ganzak*, with the Old Persian termination *ak*, is used

in 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, to denote one of the treasuries of the temple. It is not the only occasion on which in post-exilic times a foreign word was employed to denote a building at Jerusalem. The famous fortress of Jerusalem, of which we first hear in Nehemiah (ii. 8; vii. 2), and which was known in the Roman age as the tower of Antonia, was termed the *birah*. Now *birah* was the Assyrian *biratu*, a name given to the fortresses which defended the entrance into a country, or commanded the passage of a river, like the '*birat* of Syria,' the modern Bir-ejik, which protected one of the fords of the Euphrates. The name was sometimes further applied to the citadel of a city, more especially if the city were a capital, and the fortress attached to the royal residence. Hence we find Shushan, the spring residence of the Persian kings, called '*the birah*' in the Old Testament, and in 1 Chron. xxix. 1, 19, the name is even given to Solomon's temple itself. The Authorised Version uniformly renders it '*palace*,' but the proper translation would be '*fortress*.'

But it was not only technical terms like the titles of officers, or the names of buildings, that were borrowed by the Jews from their Babylonian and Persian masters; we find even such adverbs as '*fully*,' '*diligently*,' '*at last*,' introduced into Hebrew from the Persian language. *Asparna*, which occurs seven times in Ezra, is the Old Persian *usfrana*, '*completely*;' *adarzēda* (Ez. vii. 23), the Persian *durust*, '*rightly*;' *aptom* (Ez. iv. 13), the Old Persian *apatama*, '*finally*.' It is little wonder, therefore, if we recognise an Old Persian word *pati-gama* in *pithgam*, '*an imperial rescript*' (Ez. iv. 17; vi. 11), or

'official letter' (Ez. v. 7); or refer *nistevân*, 'a letter' Ez. iv. 7, &c.), to a Persian source.

There is one class of words which the Jews brought back with them from the Babylonish exile, that show more plainly than anything else, how deeply affected they must have been by their long sojourn in a foreign land. These are the names of the months. After the exile, the old Jewish names, which were common alike to the Hebrews and Phœnicians, disappear entirely, and their places are taken by those current in Babylonia. Even the old mode of naming the months according to their succession gradually disappears also; the first month becomes Nisan, and the second Iyyar. The decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions has cleared up the meaning of most of the names given by the Babylonians and Assyrians to their months, and has thus explained, at the same time, the forms taken by these names in Jewish literature. Nisan, for instance, is the month of 'opening,' Sivan, of 'brickmaking,' Elul, of 'the spirit' (Ishtar), Marchesvan, 'the eighth month,' Adar, 'the dark.' Considering how closely connected were the names of the months with the transactions of every-day life, the adoption of their Babylonian titles was a significant event, and proved how ready the majority of the Jewish captives were to forget the language of their fathers.

In the Jewish canon of Scripture the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are placed among the 'Chthubim,' or Hagiographa, following Daniel and immediately preceding the Books of Chronicles with which the Old Testament is made to end. Strictly speaking, however, they ought to come after the Chronicles, as they continue the history contained in the latter work.

With them the canonical history of Old Testament Scripture comes to a close, to be taken up later by the apocryphal books of the Maccabees, written no longer in Hebrew, but in Greek.¹ The inspired account of God's dealings with His people is traced for us until the promises of restoration made through His prophets have been fulfilled, and the lesson the punishment of the captivity was intended to teach has been learned. When the temple has been restored, when the walls of Jerusalem have been rebuilt, and the people have bound themselves to obey the Law, the task of the long series of inspired historians is over. The Jewish Church has been at last fitted to await in patience the Advent of Christ.

The authority of the Book of Nehemiah has been strangely disregarded by the Jewish historian Josephus, usually so careful to follow the statements of his sacred books. His account of the period which it covers contradicts in almost every important point what we are told by Nehemiah. Thus he makes Ezra die before the arrival of Nehemiah at Jerusalem; he places the governorship of Nehemiah in the reign of Xerxes (B.C. 485-465), and declares that the walls of the city were finished in the month Chisleu, in the twenty-eighth year of Xerxes, after two years and four months of building; and he transfers Sanballat and Tobiah to the age of Alexander the Great, adding that Sanballat's daughter married the son, not of Joiada (Neh. xiii. 28), but of Jonathan, the father of Jaddua. There is little doubt that he has been misled

¹ There is philological evidence, however, that the *first* Book of Maccabees was originally written in Hebrew, as indeed is expressly stated by St. Jerome.

by some apocryphal production, which went under the name of Nehemiah, and the authority of which he has preferred to that of the genuine work of the great 'Tirshatha.' In the second Book of Maccabees (ii. 13) mention is made of 'the writings and commentaries of Neemias,' from which the author of the book has already quoted a legend about the fire of the altar that was hid in a pit. From the same source Josephus must have derived his misstatements about Nehemiah, as well as his false chronology of the Persian kings. Of these he changes Artaxerxes into Xerxes, to whom he ascribes a reign of thirty-two years, while he assumes that Artaxerxes Longimanus (B.C. 465-425) was succeeded by Darius Codomannus (B.C. 336-331). We may judge from this how little reliance is to be placed in the statements of Josephus and his authority, as regards the age and work of Nehemiah.

No quotation from either the Book of Ezra or the Book of Nehemiah is to be found in the New Testament. The Septuagint Version of the latter book seems to have been made by an unskilful translator who was not well acquainted with Hebrew. At all events, many words are left untranslated, while there are others which are misread. The Hebrew text, on the other hand, is in a good condition, unlike that of the Book of Ezra, which has suffered considerably from corruption. This will account in great measure for the variations in the proper names given alike in the two works.

CHAPTER III.

THE AGE AND WORK OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

THE conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus took place in the year 538 B.C. He was already master of Persia, Media, and Lydia; and the overthrow of the empire of Nebuchadnezzar extended his dominions from the mountains of the Hindu Kush on the east to the shores of the Mediterranean on the west. Egypt alone of the older empires of the Oriental world remained independent, but its doom could not be long delayed. The career of Cyrus had indeed been marvellous. He had begun as the king only of Anzan or Elam, whose power seemed but 'small' and contemptible to his neighbour the great Babylonian monarch. But his victory over the Median king Astyages and the destruction of the Median Empire made him at once one of the most formidable princes in Western Asia. Henceforth the seat of his power was moved from Susa or Shushan to Ekbatana, called Achmetha in Scripture, Hagmatân in Persian, the capital of Media. Shushan, it is true, still continued to be a royal residence, but the court occupied it only during the spring months, Ekbatana with its cool mountain climate being the summer residence of the king. The conquest of Media was quickly followed by that of Persia, which appears to have

been under the government of a collateral branch of the family of Cyrus. Henceforward the king of Elam becomes also the king of Persia. The empire of Lydia, which extended over the greater part of Asia Minor, fell before the army of Cyrus about B.C. 540, two years before 'the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places' in Babylon were given to him, that he might 'know that the Lord which called him by his name was the God of Israel.' It was, the Lord declared, 'for Jacob, My servant's sake, and Israel, Mine elect,' that 'I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me.' The career of Cyrus, wonderful as it was in the eyes of men, was predetermined by God, 'who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to His foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings.'

The latter years of the life of Cyrus were spent in extending and consolidating his power among the wild tribes and unknown regions of the Far East. When he died, all was ready for the threatened invasion of Egypt. This was carried out by his son and successor Kambyzes, who had been made 'king of Babylon' three years before his father's death, Cyrus reserving to himself the imperial title of 'King of the world.' Babylon was the largest and most important city the empire contained. It had been the mistress of an extensive empire, it was the head of the richest and most cultured province of the East, and its fortifications were deemed invincible. Naturally, therefore, it became one of the capitals of the new empire, and just as an Assyrian monarch had once made his brother viceroy of Babylonia, so

Cyrus endeavoured to flatter the Babylonians by severing them from the rest of the subject provinces, and giving his son the title of their king. In Kambyes they saw the successor of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidos, and almost forgot that they were a conquered people.

As soon as Kambyes became sole sovereign, Babylon necessarily took rank with Shushan and Ekbatana. It was the third centre of the great empire, and in later days the Persian monarchs were accustomed to make it their official residence during the winter season. It had, moreover, an advantage which Ekbatana and Shushan did not possess. It was the heir of an ancient civilisation and culture, and contained libraries which were filled with students and scribes. For a time it seemed as if the Babylonian language and system of writing were destined to be the official language and script of the new lords of the East. Cyrus recorded his conquest of Babylonia and celebrated his name and acts, not in the language and writing of Elam or Media, but of the Babylonians themselves. Under Cyrus, the influence of Babylon continued to be as great as it had been under its native kings.

The newly-discovered inscriptions of Cyrus have revolutionised our ideas about the rise of the Persian empire in many respects, but in none more than as regards the character and origin of Cyrus himself. As we have seen, he and his three predecessors turn out not to have been kings of Persia at all, but of Elam, thus explaining the fact that Susa, and not Persepolis, was one of the capitals of the empire, as well as the declaration of Isaiah (xxi. 2), that the

overthrow of Babylon was to be brought about by Elam and Media. Though by descent, therefore, of Ayran blood, since his great-grandfather Teispes had been an Akhæmenid Persian, by birth and education Cyrus belonged to another race. In the second place, Cyrus, we now learn, was a polytheist, and not, like the Persians, a follower of the Zoroastrian faith. And what Cyrus was, his son Kambyses was also. Along with his father he takes part in the processions in honour of the Babylonian deities, and after his conquest of Egypt, he assumed the name of Mesut-Ra, 'Child of the Sun-god,' and allowed himself to be initiated into the mysteries of the goddess Neith. Utsa-Hor-sutennet, the priest of Neith, became his most intimate friend, and the lands which Amasis had taken from the priests and given to foreigners were restored to them; the taxes levied on the priesthood being also remitted, and not renewed until the reign of Darius. It is plain that the legends reported by Greek writers of the mad insults levelled against the Egyptian priests by Kambyses, and more especially the famous story of his mortally wounding the bull Apis, must all be fictions. That this is the case, indeed, as regards the latter story, is proved by the discovery of the stêlê attached to the sarcophagus of the bull itself. We learn from this that the bull was buried 'in peace' with the usual honours in the place 'already prepared for him by his majesty' Kambyses, who is represented in sculpture under his Egyptian title, 'Mesut-Ra, the uniter of the two worlds,' in an attitude of adoration before the divine bull. The animal had died in the month Epiphi, four years

after the Persian conquest of the country (see above, p. 16).

Kambyzes was so fascinated by his new province that he refused to leave it. The greater part of his reign was spent in Egypt, where he so thoroughly established his power and influence that it was the only part of the empire which did not rise in revolt at his death. The Egyptians seem to have regarded him with kindly feelings, which lasted until his empire was confounded with that of Darius, under whom they broke out into their first revolt against Persian rule. The hatred caused by the misgovernment of the Persian satraps was reflected upon the person of their first conqueror, and when Herodotus visited Egypt his half-caste interpreters recounted the terrible deeds committed by Kambyzes when maddened by the angry deities of the Egyptian people.

Kambyzes, indeed, did not shrink from crime. Soon after his father's death he stained his hands with the blood of his brother Bardes, called Smerdis by Herodotus, to whom Cyrus had assigned the eastern part of his empire. Bardes was put to death secretly at Susa, it is said, though how the secret was kept we do not know. Kambyzes was subsequently tormented with remorse for the deed, but this did not stave off the punishment that it eventually entailed. A Magian, Gaumâtâ or Gomates by name, who resembled Bardes in appearance, came forward to personate the murdered prince, and Persia, Media, and other provinces at once broke into rebellion against their long-absent king. When the news of this revolt reached Kambyzes he appointed Aryandes

satrap of Egypt, and, if we may believe the Greek accounts, set out to oppose the usurper. He had not proceeded far, however, before he fell by his own hand.

The false Bardes was now master of the empire. Darius, in his inscription on the rock of Behistun, tells us that 'he put to death many people who had known Bardes, to prevent its being known that he was not Bardes, son of Cyrus.' At the same time he remitted the taxes paid by the provinces, and proclaimed freedom for three years from military service. But he had not reigned more than seven months before a conspiracy was formed against him. Darius, son of Hystaspes, attacked him at the head of the conspirators, in the land of Nisæa in Media, and there slew him, on the 10th day of April, B.C. 521.

Darius, like Kambyzes, belonged to the royal Persian race of Akhæmenes. Teispes, the great-grandfather of Cyrus, who had conquered Elam and established his power there, was also the great-grandfather of Hystaspes, the father of Darius. The ancestors of Hystaspes had remained in Persia, and, according to the express testimony of Darius, had there ruled as kings. In the Elamite text of the Behistun inscription Darius declares 'Eight kings of my race have held the kingdom before me: I am the ninth who hold the kingdom: in two lines we have been kings.'¹ But though he professed to be the representative and successor of Cyrus, and the restorer of Cyrus's empire, the subject populations refused to believe that such was the case. They saw in him, and rightly, a Persian and a Zoroastrian, one

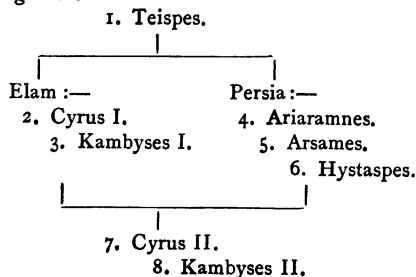
¹ For genealogical table, see next page.

whose object it would be to impose upon all the provinces of the empire the yoke of Persian domination and the Zoroastrian faith. Gomates, so Darius informs us, had destroyed the temples of the Zoroastrians, had abolished the use of the sacred hymns, and had confiscated the property of the Persian nobility. All this was now reversed. Under Darius and his successors Zoroastrianism became the State religion, and the empire was managed by the Persian ministers of a Persian king.¹

But before this could be effected, Darius had to reconquer the empire he had seized. Hardly had Gomates been slain, when Elam rose in rebellion. The Susianians had not forgotten that Cyrus and Kambyses had been kings of their own, and they refused to submit to a people whom Cyrus had subdued. Meanwhile, the satrap of Asia Minor was preparing to make himself an independent king, and was only prevented from doing so by the prompt measures of Darius and his own execution.

The revolt in Elam, which was soon put down, was followed by the far more serious revolt of Babylonia. Nidinta-Bel, the son of Anir, placed

¹ The eight kings were :—



himself at the head of it, claiming to be 'Nebuchadnezzar the son of Nabonidos.' The false Nebuchadnezzar reigned for nearly two years, and the strong walls of Babylon defied all attempts at capture. While the siege was going on, revolt followed revolt in all parts of Darius's dominions. A second insurrection broke out in Susiania; the Medes rebelled under Phraortes, who called himself Kyaxares; the Parthians and Hyrkanians deserted their satrap Hystaspes, the father of Darius, and joined Phraortes; the Sagartians and Margians revolted under leaders of their own; and even in Persia another false Bardes placed himself at the head of certain Elamite tribes. The position of Darius was well-nigh desperate; but his army of Persians and Medians stood by him, while Baktria was faithful in the east, and Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor in the west. At last, however, Babylon fell; the pretender was slain, and the walls of the city partially destroyed. Darius was now able to turn to the help of his generals in Armenia and Media; Phraortes was defeated and captured, and after the mutilation of his ears, nose, and tongue, was crucified (B.C. 518). The Parthians, Sagartians, and Margians were next overthrown, and the Sagartian leader was impaled at Arbela, within the limits of the Sagartian territory itself. Next came the turn of the false Bardes, who was eventually defeated, captured, and crucified. Elam had already become quiet again.

But Babylonia was once more in arms. It had risen under Arakha, an Armenian, when Darius was engaged in Media. This time Intaphernes, a Mede, was sent to besiege Babylon, the half-ruined walls

of which were no longer able to offer the same resistance to the enemy that they had done before. It was taken, apparently in B.C. 514, and Arakha crucified, like the other pretenders who had fallen into the merciless hands of the Persian king. Darius soon afterwards completed the re-conquest of the empire of Cryus and Kambyeses by the overthrow of the nomad tribe of Sakians.

During all this period of confusion and civil war, Palestine could not have remained unmoved. It was not, like Egypt and Asia Minor, entirely cut off from the scene of conflict, and governed like a separate kingdom by a semi-independent satrap. The tribute which had been remitted by Gomates was, doubtless, not paid again to the imperial treasury until Darius had crushed all his competitors and re-established the central power. The Phœnician cities must have profited by the occasion to act again as independent states, while the Arabs made plundering expeditions without fear of punishment or check, and the governor of Samaria treated his weaker neighbours as he chose, in the absence of any higher authority to which he was accountable. The condition, therefore, of the Jewish community at Jerusalem must have been pitiable in the extreme. They were exposed, without protection or chance of redress, to the exactions of their Phœnician neighbours, the inroads of the Beduins, and the bitter hostility of the Samaritans. The picture presented to us by the Book of Ezra and the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah is what we should expect. Even in much later days, when the empire had enjoyed for years the fruits of the organised government established by Darius, the

roads were still so unsafe that Nehemiah required an armed escort when he was travelling. Gashmu and his Arabs encamped in the near neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and the Samaritan governor could plot the assassination of the Jewish 'Tirshatha.' We need not wonder, therefore, that the rebuilding of the temple, which had been begun with such zeal and hopefulness by the returned exiles, should have 'ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius.' 'The people of the land,' whether Samaritans or Canaanites, prevented the work, partly by misrepresentations to the king, partly by active opposition when the central authority had been destroyed, while the impoverished Jews themselves lost heart and ability for carrying it on. Civil war had been followed, as usual, by blight and famine (Hag. ii. 16, 17), and a small and unprotected community could do but little in times when 'there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in, because of the affliction: for' God had 'set all men every one against his neighbour' (Zech. viii. 10).

It was in the second year of Darius¹ (B.C. 520), the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, Elul, or August, that 'the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high-priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people,' so that they recommenced the restoration of the temple. How long they were permitted to go on with the work undisturbed we do not know. It

¹ Ezra iv. 24; Haggai i. 15.

was still proceeding in the eleventh month of Sebat, of the second year of Darius (Zech. i. 7), and it was finished on the third day of the twelfth month Adar, of the sixth year of Darius (B.C. 515).¹ But while Haggai and Zechariah were encouraging their countrymen in the holy work, Tatnai, the satrap of Syria, came to them and said, 'Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?' The 'wall,' perhaps, referred to the *birah*, or 'fortress,' attached to the northern side of the temple. At a time when the empire of Darius was being shaken to its foundations by revolts, the activity of the Jews naturally seemed suspicious to the zealous Persian satrap, who had possibly been informed of it by the Samaritans. When he learned that Cyrus had issued a decree permitting the building to be raised, he wrote to the king to inquire whether the statement could be verified. Search was accordingly made in the royal 'library' at Babylon, where the cylinder-inscription of Cyrus shows us that the decree had originally been given. Here, however, it was not found, and it was only when the archives of Ekbatana had been examined that 'a roll' containing the edict was discovered. It had, in the first instance, no doubt, been inscribed on clay, and stored up among the archives in Babylon, but a copy on papyrus had been afterwards made of it, as of other State documents, for preservation at Ekbatana.

When could this search and discovery have been made? Babylon was in a state of rebellion from B.C. 521, the first year of Darius, to the autumn of B.C.

¹ Ezra vi. 15.

519, Media, of which Ekbatana was the capital, from B.C. 520 to B.C. 518. In the seventh year of Darius, as we gather from the contract-tables of the great Babylonian banking firm of the Egibi, Babylon was again in revolt under Arakha (B.C. 514). Consequently it was only between B.C. 518 and B.C. 515-14 that Darius could have ordered the search. Hence, Tatnai's letter could not have well been written before B.C. 518 or 517, when the authority of Darius was in great measure re-established throughout his empire. Without doubt, much had been done in the work of rebuilding the temple before the interference of Tatnai, and it is possible that the work was continued in spite of it. The authority of Darius and his satrap could not as yet have been very powerful in Palestine, though the period of anarchy was now over, and relations were again established between the Jews at Jerusalem and their brethren in Babylonia.¹

It is noticeable that the Jews were excited by the words of the prophets to set to work once more at the restoration of the temple just at the very time when the dissolution of the Persian Empire seemed an accomplished fact. It was while Darius was engaged in the siege of Babylon, and the provinces on all sides were shaking off his yoke, that the message of God came to Haggai and Zechariah. The key to this is given us in Ezra iv. 5. The adversaries of the Jews had 'hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of

¹ Zech. v. 11; vi. 10.

Persia.' It was not until the authority of the Persian king had been well-nigh swept away, and he had become powerless to enforce his decrees in the provinces which still remained faithful, or even to listen to the complaints which came from them, that the Jews were again able to set about their great work. What they had now to contend against were the open attacks of their immediate neighbours, not court intrigues and imperial prohibitions. Only when Babylon and Media were reduced was the royal authority once more invoked against them.

Darius was an able administrator as well as a successful general. He was the real founder of the Persian Empire, which was organised into a homogeneous whole with its centre at Susa, or Shushan. The king was the source of all dignities and power: he appointed the bureaucracy, which from henceforth administered the affairs of the State. The Persian Empire finds a close parallel in the Turkey of to-day: in both we have a highly centralized bureaucracy, the members of which owe their offices to an irresponsible despot. It was divided into more than twenty satrapies. Darius enumerates twenty-three at Behistun and twenty-nine on his tomb at Naksh-i-Rustem. The satrap was a small king appointed by the crown, and responsible for a fixed tribute, which ranged from £42,000 to £250,000 a year. Out of this the satrap himself, the civil and military governors, and the army, were all paid, what remained being reserved for the imperial exchequer. It was the interest of the crown to see that the provinces were not exhausted by over-taxation, but, unfortunately, as in modern Oriental countries,

extortion could not be prevented. The power of the satrap, which might easily have become dangerous to the central authority, was checked in various ways. Royal scribes, to whom reference has already been made, and of whom Rehum seems to have been one, were employed to send up reports of the satrap and his doings to the king. As they were appointed by the king, and were independent of the satrap, they acted as a kind of spies. The satraps themselves were generally connected with the king by birth or marriage ; and, at all events in Persia proper, royal judges went on circuit once each year. The command of the troops was also handed over to a separate commander, and important fortresses were placed under independent officers. This division of the civil and military authority, however, could not be carried out in the border provinces, where the empire adjoined dangerous enemies, and it was accordingly in these border provinces that revolts broke out. The districts of which a satrapy were composed were not always contiguous, but were sometimes separated from one another like the isolated portions of the Scotch county of Cromarty. Nineteen of the satrapies paid into the exchequer altogether 7,740 silver talents, or £2,964,000 each year, while the Indian province paid by itself as much as £1,290,000 in gold. Of the nineteen, Babylonia contributed by far the most (£290,000), while Syria did not furnish more than 350 talents, or £100,000. Tribute in kind was also taken, and taxes were levied in many places for the use of water from the imperial demesnes, for the right of fishing, and the like. The gold and silver were collected at Susa, where they were coined

into darics, which were impressed with the rude representation of an archer, and were remarkably pure. In return for the tribute, public works were undertaken in the provinces at the imperial expense. Good roads and bridges were constructed throughout the country, and communication was kept up between the towns by an efficient postal service. The roads all met at Susa, and were protected against brigandage or Beduin raids by a military police. Each province had to provide a certain number of recruits for the army ; these were formed into contingents of 10,000 men each, commanded by a Persian general.

The Jews, of course, were as little exempt from the military conscription as they were from the payment of the tribute. We hear of those who had to borrow money in order to pay 'the king's tribute' (Neh. v. 4), and we also hear how the Persian kings had 'dominion over the bodies and cattle' of the Jews, requiring from them military service and the use of their animals in war (Neh. ix. 37). 'Syrians of Palestine,' among whom the Jews must have been included, are mentioned by Herodotus as forming part of the army with which Xerxes invaded Greece.

It was while Darius was organising the empire he had reconquered that the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem was finally accomplished. The event was commemorated by a solemn feast of dedication. At the same time the priests were set in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, according to the arrangements established by David so many centuries before (1 Chron. xxiii. 6-24 ; xxiv. 1-19). This was followed by the observance of the Passover

on the 14th of Nisan, the first month of the new year (March, B.C. 415). Not only 'the children of the captivity,' those namely who had returned from the Babylonian exile, took part in it, but also those who had been left behind in Judah and Israel by Nebuchadnezzar and the Assyrian kings, 'all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land.'

With the dedication of the second temple, and the Passover that was kept so soon after it, the curtain falls for awhile on the little community at Jerusalem. We hear no more of Zerubbabel, no more of Joshua the high-priest, or of Haggai and Zechariah the prophets. When next we hear of Judæa, Joshua has been succeeded by his son Joiakim, and the generation that witnessed the fulfilment of God's promises to the exiled Jews has passed away. It seems to have been contented with the work that it had done, and to have made no effort to restore Jerusalem to its former state by making it once again a fortified city. As long as Darius ruled, the empire enjoyed security and rest. But its peace had been broken in B.C. 501 by the Ionic revolt. The Greek cities of Asia Minor had shaken off the yoke of the 'barbarian,' and though they were eventually reduced to obedience, the revolt had led to a war between Darius and Athens. Then came (in B.C. 490) the battle of Marathon, where Persian supremacy received its first check, and Athenian valour rolled back the advancing tide of eastern conquest. Darius determined on revenge, and for three years all Asia resounded with the din of the preparations he made for crushing the

handful of citizens who had dared to resist him. But just as the blow was about to fall it was diverted by the revolt of Egypt (B.C. 487). The armies intended for the subjugation of Greece now passed instead through Syria, and were employed against the rebellious inhabitants of the Nile.

Before the Egyptians could be subdued, Darius died (B.C. 485), in the sixty-third year of his age, and the thirty-sixth of his reign. The inscription above his tomb at Naksh-i-Rustem declares that all that he had done had been accomplished through the favour of Ormazd, the 'great god who has created this earth and that heaven, who made man,' and who raised Darius himself to be 'king, sole king of many kings, sole ruler of many rulers.' It goes on to enumerate his ancestors and the provinces which obeyed his sway, and ends with the following remarkable words:—

'Darius the king says: When Ormazd saw this earth filled with revolt and civil war, then did he entrust it to me. He made me king, and I am king. By the grace of Ormazd I have restored the earth. What I ordered was done, since it was my will. If thou thinkest: "How numerous were the lands over which king Darius ruled?" look on the images of those who bear my throne, and thou wilt recognise them. Then wilt thou know that the spear of the Persian reached afar; then wilt thou know that the Persian hath fought in battle far from his Persian land.

'Darius the king says: All that I have done have I done through the grace of Ormazd. Ormazd brought help to me until I had completed the work. May Ormazd protect from evil me and my house

and this land. Therefore I pray unto Ormazd, May Ormazd grant this to me.

‘O man! May the command of Ormazd not be despised by thee: leave not the path of right, sin not!’

The passage of the Persian troops through Palestine on their way to Egypt once more turned the eyes of their rulers upon the Jews. In the beginning of the reign of Xerxes, we are told, ‘wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem’ (Ez. iv. 6). Were the Jews accused of conspiring with the Egyptians, or of showing signs of disaffection towards their Persian masters? We do not know. But the result was that while the reign of Xerxes lasted the community at Jerusalem remained inactive. At the same time their condition, both religious and social, became worse; intermarriages with their heathen neighbours became frequent, and took place even in the high-priest’s family; the rich oppressed their poorer neighbours; they grew slack in their religious duties and the observance of the Sabbath; and famine invaded the land (Neh. v. 3). The report brought to Nehemiah was that ‘the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach.’

The traducers of Judah had better success with the weak and capricious Xerxes than they had had with his able and energetic father. As long as he lived it was hopeless for the Jews to think of bettering their condition and rebuilding their walls. His murder, however, in B.C. 465, after a reign of twenty years, brought with it a change. The Jewish community,

determined to set about building again the walls of the city, and laying its foundations. Mithridates the satrap, Rehum the official correspondent of the king, and the jealous rivals of the Jews at Samaria, at once took the alarm. A letter was written in Aramaic to Artaxerxes Longimanus, the son and successor of Xerxes, pointing out that the Jews who had arrived from Babylon 'are come to Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and they make ready the walls thereof, and lay the foundations.¹ Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay tribute, provision, or toll,' the tribute being the imperial taxation, the provision the payment in kind, and the toll the provincial taxes required for the use of the public ways and water-works, and for the maintenance of the local governor. Artaxerxes was advised to search among the archives of the kingdom, from which he would learn that Jerusalem had been 'a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces.' The letter was successful; Artaxerxes returned answer that the building should cease until he should give another commandment to the contrary. It is possible that the letter was sent at the time of the second Egyptian revolt, which took place shortly after the accession of the king, when Palestine, as the near neighbour of Egypt, would naturally be viewed with suspicion.

But a change was close at hand. Under the providence of God, Artaxerxes was induced—we know not by what precise means—to give a firman to Ezra

¹ This is the correct translation of the original.

the priest, 'a ready scribe in the law of Moses,' to whom 'the king granted all his request.' This was that he should go to Jerusalem, taking with him 'all they of the people of Israel and of the priests and Levites' who were minded to return to their native land. But Artaxerxes did a good deal more than this. He himself sent presents to the temple at Jerusalem, and remitted all tribute, provision, and toll to 'the priests and Levites, singers, porters Nethinim or ministers of the house of God.' So favourable a decree had never been issued before by any of Artaxerxes' predecessors, and it was no wonder that Ezra thanked the LORD God of his fathers 'which had put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD, which is in Jerusalem.' Besides silver and gold, Ezra carried with him vessels for the service of the temple, and whatever was wanted in addition he was empowered to demand from the royal treasury. The treasurers of the Syrian satrapy were also enjoined 'that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require,' should 'be done speedily, unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt, without prescribing how much.' To this were added the remarkable words: 'Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?' Perhaps we may see in them a recognition that the troubles of the first few years of the reign of Artaxerxes had been due to the anger of the God of Israel.

Esther, the Jewess, had been the wife of Xerxes, and it is difficult not to think that she may have had some influence over the religious ideas of the new king. At all events, Pethahiah the Zerahite, we are expressly told (Neh. xi. 23, 24), was the king's councillor in 'all things' relating to his nation, and it was at his suggestion that an allowance was assigned from the royal revenue to the singers in the temple at Jerusalem. In order to secure the execution of his orders, Artaxerxes appointed Ezra governor of Judah, with consequent power to appoint magistrates and judges in Palestine (Ez. vii. 25). Ezra accordingly left Babylon, where the king had been holding his winter court, on the first of Nisan or March (B.C. 458), the seventh year of the new reign. Nine days after his departure he reviewed the Jews who had decided to accompany him to Jerusalem, at a place called Ahava, possibly the modern Hit. But he found no Levites among them, and accordingly sent to Casiphia—a village of unknown situation—to Iddo, and 'his brethren the Nethinim,' bidding them bring ministers for the house of God. Thirty-eight Levites soon afterwards joined him along with 220 Nethinim, and a fast was proclaimed on the banks of the river or canal of Ahava, for the purpose of asking God to protect the caravan on its way to Syria. The passage of the troops to Egypt had no doubt increased the ordinary dangers of a road always infested by Beduins and brigands, and Ezra had been 'ashamed to require of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen,' for he had told him that 'the hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him; but His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him.'

The amount of gold and silver, however, which he was carrying with him (Ez. viii. 26, 27) gave him good reason to feel anxious.

The caravan left Ahava after a stay of three days, and a slow journey of four months brought it safely to Jerusalem on the first of Ab (July). The royal commissions were delivered to the satraps and governors beyond the Euphrates in Syria, 'and they furthered the people and the house of God.'

Ezra now entered on his great work of reform. The subject of mixed marriages was the first to engage his attention. The priests, the Levites, and the laity had alike made affinity with the heathen population of Canaan, the princes and rulers being 'chief in the trespass.' Ezra does not seem to have been aware of the fact before his arrival in Jerusalem. The information overwhelmed him: he 'sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.' Then he rent his garments, and fell on his knees praying to God to forgive the sin of his countrymen. The people gathered round him, and wept along with himself, one of them, Shechaniah, whose father had married a foreigner, urging him to take active measures immediately, and ask 'the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel' to 'make a covenant' with God to put away their Canaanitish wives. Those who were present swore an oath accordingly, while Ezra retired to the chamber of Johanan, the son of the high-priest Eliashib, which was inside the temple. Here he mourned and fasted on account of the transgression of the people. At the same time proclamation was made not only in Jerusalem, but also

throughout the other Jewish towns, that the Jews should assemble in Jerusalem within three days, and that whoever refused to do so should be deprived of his property and excommunicated. It is clear from this that the number of the Jewish inhabitants in the country must have been small.

The great assembly took place on the 20th day of Chisleu, or November, in the midst of the heavy rain which frequently falls at that period of the year. The people confessed the sin they had committed, and promised to put away their 'strange' wives. In spite of the opposition of a Levite and three laymen,¹ it was determined to appoint a commission at Jerusalem, consisting of Ezra and 'certain chiefs of the fathers,' before whom the elders and judges of the country towns should bring those who had married foreign women. The business occupied two months, and the Book of Ezra ends with a list of those who had intermarried with the heathen. Among them were four members of the high-priest's family.

A blank of thirteen years now intervenes in the history of Ezra and the Jewish people. When we hear of them again, it is in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (B.C. 446). The Egyptian rebellion, though supported by the fleet and soldiers of Athens, had at length been put down after several years of hard fighting. Megabyzos, the satrap of Syria, had successfully defied the king, and forced him to agree to his own terms of peace, thus giving the first open sign of the internal decay of the empire. It is pos-

¹ Ez. x. 15. The verse is mistranslated in the A.V.,

sible that the disaffection of the satrap may account for the silence in Scripture as to the events which followed Ezra's reform. Deprived of the royal support, he would no longer be able to maintain himself as governor in face of the opposition he was certain to experience from the Samaritans. It would also account for the condition in which we find the Jews when the Book of Nehemiah opens. The walls of the city are still unbuilt, Ezra has ceased to be governor, the people are 'in great affliction and reproach,' the Arabs are encamping close to Jerusalem, Sanballat and his allies are all-powerful, and priests and laity alike have gone back to their heathen or foreign wives.

Nehemiah's brother brought him a report of the miserable state of the Jews at Jerusalem while he was serving in the palace at Shushan, where he acted as the king's cup-bearer. This was in the month Chisleu, or November, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. Five months later it was Nehemiah's turn to hand the king his wine, the queen Damaspia sitting by, and Artaxerxes noticed that he looked dejected and distressed. He asked accordingly what was the matter with him, and Nehemiah, after an inward prayer to God, told the reason, and asked permission to visit Jerusalem and rebuild its walls. The permission was granted ; Nehemiah was at the same time appointed governor of Judæa, and empowered to require timber from Asaph, the keeper of the royal park, for the walls for the *birah* or citadel of the temple, and for his own house. The park or paradise was a peculiarly Persian institution. Large spaces were enclosed, planted with trees and

filled with animals, which the king and his nobles amused themselves with hunting. Certain portions of the park were also separated from the rest, and laid out ornamentally with shrubberies and walks. The park of which Asaph was the superintendent must have been near Jerusalem, since the timber cut in it was to be used for the building of the latter city, and the name of Asaph seems to show that he was of Jewish origin.

The new governor started on his journey at once with an escort of cavalry and their commanders. He naturally travelled more quickly than Ezra had done, since he was not encumbered with a caravan of women and children, and he seems to have reached Jerusalem in somewhat less than three months. Here he found himself opposed by Sanballat of Samaria, who is called the Horonite, from one of the Beth-Horons of Ephraim, and who was assisted by Tobiah the Ammonite, and Gashmu or Geshem, the Arab. Without delay he set about the work which he had come to effect. Three nights after his arrival he rode secretly round a large part of the walls, and examined the condition in which they were. He then convened his countrymen, told them that a royal permission for the repair of the walls had at last been given, and induced them to begin the work at once. It was accomplished in fifty-two days, on the 25th of Elul (August), but not without violent opposition on the part of Sanballat and his allies. They had left Jerusalem, it would appear, shortly after Nehemiah's arrival (Neh. ii. 19, 20, compared with iv. 1-8), and now conspired 'to come and to fight against' it. Geshem's Beduins,

who acknowledged only a doubtful obedience to the Persian king, were useful in a case of this kind, since had the attack been successful, Sanballat could have represented it as one of the plundering expeditions which the wild and lawless Arabs were from time to time in the habit of making, and the imperial police were unable to prevent. The attempt, however, failed, as the Jews were informed of the plot, and accordingly worked with swords at their sides, while others kept guard over the breaches in the wall and the ruined towers. Sanballat, therefore, tried a different plan. He withdrew to the plain of Ono, nearly thirty miles distant from Jerusalem, and five times endeavoured to entice Nehemiah to meet him there, alleging that a report was being spread that Nehemiah had hired prophets to proclaim him king, and that it would be advisable for the Jewish governor to confer with his Samaritan colleague as to the best means of contradicting it. On the fifth occasion, finding that his former messages were unheeded, Sanballat sent an open letter, the contents of which would necessarily be generally known, while Tobiah corresponded with 'the nobles of Judah,' with whom he was allied by marriage, and the prophetess Noadiah, like some of the other prophets, and a certain Shemaiah, were 'hired' to put Nehemiah in fear. Nehemiah's trust in God, however, never wavered; he perceived clearly that Sanballat's intention was to assassinate him, and he therefore refused to leave Jerusalem and the work of completing the walls.

The treachery of the Jewish nobles was probably

due to another cause besides the marriage of Tobiah and his son into the families of two among them. While the walls were being built 'there was a great cry of the people and their wives against their brethren the Jews.' The poorer classes complained that they had been obliged to mortgage their property, and even to sell their children as slaves to their richer brethren, who had taken advantage of the recent seasons of dearth. The complaint filled Nehemiah with indignation. He summoned a meeting, and appealed to the priests and nobles to restore the property they had taken, as well as 'the hundredth part of the money, corn, wine and oil' which they claimed from their debtors. He contrasted his own conduct with theirs: 'We,' he said, 'after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren?' The appeal was not without effect, and the creditors swore to restore what they had exacted, and to require no more. Nevertheless, a sore feeling towards their new governor seems to have remained in the hearts of some at least of the richer classes.'

When at last the walls were built and all the gates erected, they were entrusted to the guardianship of the porters, singers, and Levites, who had hitherto kept the watch of the temple. At the same time the government of the whole city was put into the hands of Nehemiah's brother Hanani and Hananiah the commander of the temple-fortress. Six days later, on the first of Tisri, or September, the day of the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24), the Jews were called together from the various towns and villages

of the country, and assembled in the court in front of the water-gate.¹

Ezra 'the scribe' now appears upon the scene again. He took his stand by the side of Nehemiah, 'the Tirshatha,' and from a wooden pulpit erected for the occasion, read to the assembled multitude out of 'the book of the law of Moses.' Six priests stood on his right, and seven on his left, while thirteen Levites explained what was read to the people. On the day following the first meeting of the assembly, the reader came to the passage in Leviticus xxiii. 39-43, which enjoined the Israelites to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month. The injunction had been forgotten in the period of religious and civil decay that had preceded the arrival of Nehemiah. It had remained unknown apparently even to Ezra, if indeed he had been at Jerusalem throughout the whole of the thirteen years during which we hear nothing of him. The last observance of the feast seems to have been that which took place shortly after the return of Zerubabel (Ez. iii. 4). The obligation to observe the feast each year had been overlooked by him and his companions, and the very memory of it had passed away. Could anything prove more clearly that the language of the Pentateuch had ceased to be the every-day language of the Jewish community? Now, however, that the obligation was brought home to them, it was acted upon without delay. Booths were made of branches of the olive and other trees from

¹ The latter part of Neh. vii. 73 should be rendered (like Ez. iii. 1): 'And when the seventh month came, and the children of Israel were in their cities, all the people gathered themselves together,' &c.

the Mount of Olives, and the feast was kept for eight days. Each day portions of the law were read by Ezra. Such a celebration of the feast had not been known 'since the days of Joshua the son of Nun.'

The feast was followed on the 24th of the month by a solemn fast. The Levites made a confession of sins on behalf of the people, and a covenant was entered into that 'the seed of Israel' should separate 'themselves from all strangers.' The covenant was recorded in writing, and sealed by Nehemiah, the priests, Levites, and princes. The name of the lukewarm high-priest Eliashib is wanting among those that sealed: it is not surprising that we afterwards learn that he was 'allied unto Tobiah,' for whom he furnished a chamber in the temple itself. It is strange, however, that the name of Ezra should also be wanting; the only explanation of the fact can be that Ezra was no longer in any way a representative of his nation. He was simply the scribe who read the law in the public assemblies. His place as governor had been taken by Nehemiah; he was not a prince, nor was he one of the priests or Levites who were at the time performing public functions in the temple. We are told that 'the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinim, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God,'¹ subscribed

¹ At first sight this seems inconsistent with ix. 2, where it is stated that only 'the seed of Israel' separated themselves from the Gentiles on that same day. But in x. 28 reference appears to be made to the descendants of the ten tribes, and of those portions of the tribe of Judah itself which had not been carried into captivity, but had been left in Palestine. These, having kept apart from the Canaanites, now solemnly united themselves with 'the children of the captivity.'

to the covenant that had been made, but did not seal it. It was sealed, in fact, only by those who represented the chief families of the community.' This is expressly stated as regards 'the heads of the people'—that is to say, the ancestors of the various families or clans. Their names are in large measure the same as those given in Neh. vii. 8 *et seq.* as belonging to the ancestors of the families who accompanied Zerubbabel to Jerusalem. That the names of the priests and Levites are also representative, and not personal, is rendered probable by the fact that sixteen out of the twenty-one priests are stated in Neh. xii. 1-7 to have returned from Babylon in the time of Cyrus, and four of the Levites seem to have done the same (xii. 8). Moreover, the twenty-one priestly names would correspond with the twenty-one divisions of the priestly order.¹ Nehemiah himself represented the whole state, and Zidkijah, whose name stands next to his, is supposed to be the same as Zadok 'the scribe' of xiii. 13, and to have been the secretary of the Tirshatha. But there is no reason why we should not consider him to represent one of the courses of the priesthood, except that the list given in Neh. xii. 1 begins with the name of Seraiah. In Neh. xi. 11 the house of Seraiah is not the first named among the priestly families. It will be remembered that Ezra was descended from a

¹ In the time of David there were twenty-four divisions (1 Chron. xxiv. 7-18); these had been reduced to twenty-two in the time of Zerubbabel (Neh. xii. 1-7). If Zidkijah is not to be regarded as the governor's secretary, this would still have been the number in the age of Nehemiah.

Seraiah¹ who must have flourished in the reign of Zedekiah.²

The covenant entered into by the people and their rulers began with a general agreement 'to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our God, and His judgments, and His statutes.' It then went on to particularise those provisions of the Law which were most in question at the time. In the first place, the Jewish community bound themselves not to give their daughters to the people of the land, nor to marry the Canaanitish women themselves. Secondly, they determined that Sabbaths and holy-days should be strictly kept, and that no foreign traders should be allowed on such days to offer wares or victuals for sale. Thirdly, they promised to observe the Sabbatical regulations of the seventh year, remitting, according to the prescriptions of Deuteronomy (xv. 1-4), all debts incurred during the previous six. Next, they 'made ordinances' to charge themselves yearly with the third part of a shekel to defray the expenses of the temple. The full amount prescribed by the Law (Exod. xxx. 13) was half a shekel; but in the impoverished condition of the population it was impossible to exact so much. In the last place, lots were cast to decide who should provide the wood required for the sacrifices, and at the same time an engagement was entered into to offer to God each year the firstborn of their sons and cattle, and the first-fruits of the ground, for the benefit of the

¹ Ez. vii. 1.

² 1 Chron. vi. 14.

priests ; tithes being also given to the priests, 'the sons of Aaron,' and the Levites, in order that the latter 'might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.' In this way full provision was at last made for the maintenance of the temple and its ministers, in accordance with the injunctions of the Levitical Law.

Nehemiah now set about the task of restoring order in Judæa, and increasing the scanty population of Jerusalem. 'The rulers of the people' already dwelt there, and had built for themselves those houses of panelled cedar which had excited the indignation of Haggai, while the house of God was lying waste. The great body of the people were now ordered to draw lots, one out of ten being thus selected to live in 'Jerusalem, the holy city,' and the nine others in the other towns and villages of the country. Before the lots could be drawn, however, a census was necessary. The last had been made by Zerubbabel, and the record of this had been found by Nehemiah shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem (vii. 5 *et seq.*). At that time, 'the whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore, beside their man-servants and their maid-servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven : and they had two hundred forty and five singing men and singing women' (Neh. vii. 66, 67 ; Ez. ii. 64, 65). This was indeed a small number to repeople the whole of Judæa ; but it must be remembered that the country was not altogether depopulated, and that not only were the descendants of the old Canaanitish tribes to be

found in it, besides immigrants from Ammon and other neighbouring districts, but that a portion of the Jewish nation itself had been left behind by Nebuchadnezzar. A large part of the latter, it is true, had afterwards migrated to Egypt, but not all.

Since the return of Zerubbabel and his companions, the numbers of 'the children of the captivity,' as they are termed, to distinguish them from the Israelites and Jews who had never been carried into exile, had been slightly increased from time to time by the arrival of others of their brethren from Babylonia. But the population was still small at the time when Nehemiah undertook its administration; and in Jerusalem itself, though 'the city was large and great, the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded' (Neh. vii. 4). The first care of the Tirshatha, therefore, now that Jerusalem had again become a fortified city and a safe place of residence, was to provide it with a suitable population. The official list of this lies before us in two copies, one in Neh. xi., and the other in 1 Chron. ix. 3-22. Some divergences exist between the two copies, mainly due, it would seem—more especially in the case of the numbers—to corruption of the text in the Chronicles. According to Nehemiah, the adult population of the city, exclusive of the Nethinim on Ophel, amounted to 3,044, which would imply a total Jewish population of about 13,000. According to the Chronicles, the adult population was 3,618, besides the Nethinim and certain 'children of Ephraim and Manasseh;' this would give a total Israelitish population of about

15,000. In addition to this there were the servants or slaves.

It was after the settlement of the population—though the exact date is not given, and is therefore uncertain—that the newly-built walls were solemnly dedicated to God. Jerusalem had been supplied with the inhabitants who were to dwell within their shelter, and defend them, as the temple and its fortress had been defended previously; but before the new garrison could enter upon its duties it was necessary that the walls, like the temple, should be consecrated to the Lord. The Levites and singers flocked in from the villages about Jerusalem, and Nehemiah placed ‘the princes of Judah’ on the wall, and marshalled the procession. It marched in two great bodies, one of which went round the southern half of the wall, and the other round the northern half, each starting from the same point on the western side. After the procession was over, ‘they offered great sacrifices and rejoiced.’ At the same time superintendents were appointed over certain chambers in the temple which were set apart to receive the money, tithes, and other offerings made for the support of the sanctuary and its officers.

1 The two lists are as follows:—

I. Tribe of Judah :—	Nehemiah.	1 Chronicles.
Pharez.....	468	...
Zerah	690
II. Tribe of Benjamin	928	956
III. Tribe of Levi :—		
Priests	1,192	1,760
Levites	284	...
Porters	172	212
Total	3,044	3,618

Here a break occurs in the memoirs of Nehemiah. The last two verses of chapter xii. seem to have been added by the writer of viii.-x. (see above, p. 33), and the first verse of the next chapter is introduced abruptly without any conjunction or other sign of connection with what precedes. A portion of Nehemiah's narrative has, for reasons unknown to us, been suppressed. We learn from xiii. 6 that it related to events which occupied as much as twelve years. In the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah was recalled by the king, who was then at Babylon, but after a short interval was allowed to return to Jerusalem with his former powers. He must have arrived at the beginning of the autumn (xiii. 15). During his absence, the Jews fell back into their old intercourse with the Gentiles, Eliashib the high-priest himself setting the example. Not only was his grandson married to Sanballat's daughter, but he was himself also 'allied' to Tobiah, the Ammonite slave, to whom he had handed over one of the chambers in the temple. This had been reserved after the dedication of the walls for the storage of the tithes and other provisions for the Levites and priests.

When Nehemiah returned to Judæa, he found a general apostasy from the covenant so solemnly entered into twelve years before. He first turned Tobiah out of the chamber that had been assigned to him, and, after purifying it, restored it to its proper use. Then he ordered the tithes to be again brought for the maintenance of the Levites and singers. They had ceased to be paid for some time, so that the ministers of the temple had been obliged

to leave Jerusalem and give themselves to the tillage of their lands in order to live. Treasurers were appointed at the same time to distribute the funds to the priests and Levites, and secure their regular payment. Nehemiah now found that the Sabbath-day was being profaned. He saw 'some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses ; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day.' The Tyrian merchants, moreover, who lived in the city, sold fish and other things to the inhabitants on the same holy day. Nehemiah accordingly caused the gates of Jerusalem to be closed during the whole of the Sabbath, and sent guards to prevent the merchants from entering with their goods. He even forbade them to encamp outside the walls on that day, threatening to use force if they did. The last evil to be attacked was the intermarriages between the Jews and their heathen neighbours. Nehemiah saw 'Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab,' whose children spoke a mixed dialect, partly Jewish, partly that of Ashdod. He 'contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God' that such intermarriages should be forbidden for the future. Preparation for this treatment of the offenders had been made by the reading of the Law described in the first three verses of chapter xiii. When the assembled people had heard the words of Deuteronomy, declaring 'that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever,' they 'separated from

Israel all the mixed multitude.' Having thus reformed the people at large, the governor turned to the chief sinners, the priests and princes, who had set so evil an example in the state. Among these the grandson of the high-priest was the most conspicuous, and him, says Nehemiah, in expressive language, 'I chased from me.' It is probable that this unnamed grandson of Eliashib was the famous Manasseh, the founder of the rival temple on Mount Gerizim. Josephus, it is true, places him in the age of Alexander the Great, but this is because the Jewish historian has transferred Manasseh's father-in-law, Sanballat, to this erroneous date. Josephus tells us that he was accompanied to Samaria by other priests and Levites who had married into Gentile families; and that Eliashib's grandson was supported by members of the priestly order is evident from Nehemiah's words: 'Remember *them*, O my God, because *they* have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.' Samaria was the natural place of refuge for fugitives from Jerusalem, and it is obvious that Nehemiah's reform—supported as it was by the bulk of the people—could not have been carried through without opposition.

With the prayer to God that He would remember his zeal in the Divine service, the Book of Nehemiah comes to an end. We know no more about him. His memoirs must have been composed soon after the events described in the last chapter, and it is possible that his death followed shortly afterwards. Throughout his term of office he had shown himself an upright and incorruptible ruler.

All former governors of Judæa, he tells us, including even Zerubbabel and Ezra, had rigorously exacted from the people the contributions in money and kind which the provinces were required to furnish to the governor. In Judæa these consisted of forty shekels of silver, besides bread and wine. So far, however, from demanding his dues, Nehemiah entertained each day at his table not only 150 of the leading men in Jerusalem, but also the visitors who came to him from abroad. For such a company an ox, six sheep, and plenty of poultry had to be killed daily, while the stock of wine was replenished every ten days.¹ When the walls were being restored, Nehemiah bore the cost of part of the work, and allowed neither himself nor his servants to take advantage of the prevailing poverty to buy land at a low rate. He derived no pecuniary benefit from his official post, except his lodging in the governor's residence, on the western side of the city (Neh. iii. 7).

Ezra must have died during Nehemiah's first tenure of office. Zadok appears as 'the scribe' after Nehemiah's return to Judah,² and it is difficult to believe that the covenant that the Jews had made would have been so flagrantly violated by them had Ezra been still alive. The chief part of his literary labours must have been accomplished during the thirteen years that elapsed between the close of his own narrative and the beginning of that of Nehemiah. They were years of official repose, in which he would have been able to collect and arrange the earlier books of the Old Testament, and more especially

¹ Neh. v. 18.

² Neh. xiii. 13.

THE AGE AND WORK OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

the book of the Law. How little these were known to the community at large appears from the narrative of Nehemiah; the words of the Law came to the Jews with the force of a new revelation when they heard them read by Ezra after Nehemiah's arrival in Jerusalem. Possibly Ezra's work of collection and arrangement was but just finished, and he had had no previous opportunity of making known to his countrymen the injunctions of their inspired law-giver. We need not believe the legend in the Second Book of Esdras (iv. 21-47), that he and his five companions re-wrote the law which had been burnt, or the tradition of the Talmud, which ascribes the revision of the Old Testament to Ezra and 'the men of the Great Synagogue;' but it is scarcely probable that a fact does not underlie both the legend and the tradition, and that the preservation of much of the text of the sacred volume is, humanly speaking, due to the labours of the great scribe.

Artaxerxes, the patron of Ezra and Nehemiah, died in B.C. 425, after a long reign of forty years. The greater part of it was passed in peace. Only one inscription of his is known to us: it illustrates, however, the trust of the king in his god Ormazd. The inscription is as follows:—

'A great god is Ormazd, who created the heaven, who created the earth, who created man, who has given blessings to men, who made Artaxerxes king, sole king of many kings, sole ruler of many rulers.

'I am Artaxerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of lands where all languages are spoken, the king of this great wide earth, the

son of king Xerxes, grandson of king Darius the Achæmenian.

‘Artaxerxes the king says: In the shadow of Ormazd I have finished this house which my father began. May Ormazd protect me and my work, and my sovereignty and my lands.’

The death of Artaxerxes was the signal for a long series of disturbances in the empire, which only ended with its overthrow by Alexander. The kings made their way to the throne by murder, formidable revolts broke out on all sides, and the purity of the Zoroastrian faith became corrupted. The successors of Artaxerxes no longer invoke Ormazd alone in their inscriptions; they join with him the foreign goddess Anahid, and Mithras, the Sun-god. A prince so favourable to the Jewish religion as Artaxerxes I. had been never again sat on the throne of Persia. But the work which he had been raised up to do had been accomplished, and the Jewish Church was firmly established beyond the reach of court intrigues or of civil strife.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

THE topography of ancient Jerusalem has given rise to many controversies, some of which are not yet settled. It must therefore be remembered that all the views presented in this chapter are not likely to meet with universal acceptance, and that further exploration and excavation in the holy city are needed before the question can be finally settled. But it is impossible to leave the Book of Nehemiah without trying to explain his description of the walls which he rebuilt, and the gates which he set up, or to gain some idea of the city to which the exiles returned.

The starting-point of any attempt to restore the topography of the Jerusalem of the kings and Nehemiah must for the future be the inscription discovered in 1880, in the tunnel cut through the rock that conducts the water of the Virgin's Spring into the modern Pool of Siloam. The inscription is the earliest Hebrew one known to us, and shows us the forms of the characters used by Isaiah and his contemporaries. The translation of it is as follows :—

(1) '[Behold] the excavation! Now this had been the history of the excavation. While the workmen were still lifting up

(2) 'The axe, each towards his neighbour, and while three cubits still remained to be [cut through], [each heard] the voice of the other who called

(3) 'To his neighbour, since there was an excess in the rock on the right hand and on [the left]. And on the day of the

(4) 'Excavation the workmen struck, each to meet his neighbour, axe against axe, and there flowed

(5) 'The waters from the spring to the pool for a thousand two hundred cubits; and . . .

(6) 'Of a cubit was the height of the rock over the heads of the workmen.'

The object of the tunnel is evident. The Virgin's Spring is the only natural outflow of water in or about Jerusalem; but it rises outside the walls, and had consequently to be 'sealed up' or closed when the city was threatened by an enemy. By excavating the tunnel—which was begun simultaneously at both ends, the workmen meeting in the middle—the water was conducted into the city, and thus supplemented the precarious supply furnished by the rain.

Now, the inscription makes it clear that the Virgin's Spring is the Gihon of Scripture. Gihon means 'a natural spring,' and the Virgin's Spring, as has been said, is the only one in or about Jerusalem which answers to this name. Moreover, the 'exit' of Gihon is mentioned in 2 Chron. xxxii. 30, the very word being used which is translated 'spring' in the inscription above. In the Book of Chronicles however, this Gihon is called 'the Upper Gihon,'

¹ The literal rendering is 'the exit of the waters of the Upper Gihon.'

implying that there was a lower one also. In the time of David there was still but one Gihon (1 Kings i. 33, 45), so that the Lower Gihon must have come into existence subsequently. What else can this latter be but the original Pool of Siloam itself, since exploration has shown that a second rock-cut conduit started from this to carry the surplus water into another pool below? The original pool, 'the pool,' as it is termed in the inscription, thus became a second Gihon or natural spring.

It might be inferred that the second conduit and the Lower Pool of Siloam were those described in 2 Kings xx. 20 ('And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made the pool and the conduit, and brought the water to ¹ the city'), when read in the light of 2 Chron. xxxii. 30 ('This same Hezekiah sealed up the exit of the waters of the Upper Gihon, and directed them downwards on the western side of the city of David'), more especially when we remember that the 'softly-flowing' waters of Shiloah or Siloam already existed in the reign of Ahaz, the predecessor of Hezekiah, (Isa. viii. 6), while M. Derenbourg has pointed out that the word Shiloah signifies 'a conduit.' The inference, however, is denied by some scholars, who maintain that the tunnel of Siloam is the conduit made by Hezekiah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem having previously had to depend upon rain-water. However this may be, whether the tunnel of Siloam or the southerly continuation of it be Hezekiah's conduit, the fact remains that the City of David, on

¹ 'To' or 'towards,' not 'into.'

the western side of which Hezekiah conveyed the water, must have occupied the hill on the south-western slope of which is the Pool of Siloam. The position of the City of David has thus been fixed with certainty by means of the newly-discovered inscription; and since the City of David was the same as Zion, according to 2 Sam. v. 7, the position of the hill of Zion has been fixed also. The Ophel of the Old Testament, therefore, did not occupy the whole of the hill, as has sometimes been supposed, but only a semi-detached eminence at its north-eastern end. Dr. Guthe, the German explorer, has lately found traces of a valley which once separated the City of David from the Temple-hill of Moriah, and entered the Kidron valley a little above the Virgin's Spring.

If the City of David was the hill through which the tunnel of Siloam has been cut, it follows that the valley of Hinnom, which bounded it on the western side (see Jer. xix. 2, where the correct translation is 'entry of the gate of the potteries'), was the valley of the Tyropæon, or 'cheesemakers,' of the Græco-Roman period. This explains why the biblical name of the Tyropæon—broad, deep, and important as it originally was—has never hitherto been discovered.

The size of the capital of Solomon, enclosing hardly more than fifty acres, may at first sight appear small. But it was not so when compared with the size of other important cities of early times, or even of England in the Middle Ages. As we have seen, Nehemiah filled it with a population of (at most) 20,000, of whom 5,000 were slaves; and in an

Oriental city, where the houses are high, and the inhabitants sleep tightly packed together in cold weather, and in the open air in summer, the density of the population is astonishing. We may gather some idea of the way in which an Oriental crowd can be squeezed into a small compass from the statement in Neh. viii. 1, that 'all the people,' including those who had come from the country towns, 'gathered themselves together as one man into the square that was before the water-gate.' It is not strange, therefore, that Nehemiah should describe the city as being 'large and great, but the people few therein, and the houses not builded.'

The appearance of Zion, or the City of David, called Akra by Josephus, has changed a good deal since the time of Nehemiah. In the days of the Maccabees, its summit was lowered with infinite labour, in order that it might no longer overlook the Temple-mount, and the chippings of the rock were thrown into the Tyropœon valley, where they have since been found. The result of the work was that to-day the highest point of the hill is one hundred feet lower than that of Moriah, unlike the hill on the western side of the Tyropœon—now the site of the larger part of the modern city, and so long identified with Zion—which is 103 feet higher.

Immediately after his arrival at Jerusalem, Nehemiah 'went out by night by the gate of the valley [*gay*], even before the 'dragon-well' (Neh. ii. 13). We gather from chapter iii. that this gate was on the same side of the city as the Pool of Siloam, so that the valley must be that of the Tyropœon. It is, in fact, called the *gay*, in contradistinction to the

nakhal, or 'brook valley' of the Kidron. Jeremiah (xxxi. 40) terms it 'the deep vale of the dead bodies and of the ashes,' since it was doomed by God to be choked with the ashes of Jerusalem and the corpses of its defenders, as a punishment for the human victims that had been burnt in it to Moloch (Jer. xix. 6, 7, 11-13). The 'dragon-well,' now buried under the rubbish that fills the valley, may have been in connection with a rock-cut drain or conduit discovered by Sir Charles Warren running down the bed of the old valley.

As Nehemiah had to pass 'the dung port,' and 'the gate of the fountain,' before he reached the brook Kidron, it is clear that these two gates also must have opened into the Tyropœon. This gives us a clue to the position of the gates mentioned in chapter iii., where the restoration of the walls is described in detail.

Nehemiah here begins with the sheep-gate, and the towers of Meah and Hananeel which defended it on the western side (see xii. 39). It has long been recognised that this gate was situated on the northern declivity of the Temple-hill, and that the tower of Hananeel probably occupied the site of the later tower of Antonia. Nehemiah next mentions the fish-gate, which must have been on the west of Moriah, since his enumeration proceeds, after the notice of one or two more gates, to the mention of the valley gate and the Pool of Shiloah. The gate seems to have taken its name from the Tyrian merchants, who brought fish (Neh. xiii. 16). Maktesh, the merchant quarter of Jerusalem, lay between Moriah and Zion, close to the fish-gate (Zeph. i. 10,

11), and was termed the 'second' city. This is the word which is mistranslated by the Authorised Version in 2 Kings xxii. 14, where 'college' should be changed into 'the second city,' as well as in Neh. xi. 9, where we ought to render: 'Judah the son of Senuah was over the second city.' It appears from this that Moriah was divided into two quarters, the first, on the south-eastern side, being known as the upper, or first city; while the second city lay below it on the west. As we learn from Neh. iii. 32, that the northern part of Moriah was given up to the goldsmiths and merchants, we may conclude that the bazaars ran along the whole line of the northern and north-western walls. According to 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14, Manasseh had built 'a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon in the valley [*nakhal*], even to the entering in at the fish-gate, and compassed about Ophel.' The Virgin's Spring is here called 'Gihon in the valley,' to distinguish it from the Lower Gihon; and the passage shows that Ophel must have extended from the western side of the spring on the east to the fish-gate on the west, 'outside,'—that is, to the north of the City of David.

After the fish-gate, Nehemiah tells us, came the old gate, to the south of which was the official residence of the governor—'the throne of the governor beyond the river,' as well as 'the broad wall.' This protected the bazaars of the goldsmiths and perfumers, and was probably part of the wall constructed by Manasseh. At this point 'the half part of Jerusalem' seems to have ended, since the next piece of wall was rebuilt by 'Rephaiah, the son

of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem'; while after a short interval, which was mainly filled with the tower of the furnaces, the wall was continued by 'Shallum, the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.' Here, therefore, we may assume, Zion was considered to begin.

The 'tower of the furnaces,' or rather 'ovens,' was, perhaps, near 'the bakers' street' (Jer. xxxvii. 21). At any rate it must have adjoined the public ovens, built of the clay found in the valley below. Here, too, in all probability, were the potteries which gave their name to the 'gate of the potteries,' mis-translated 'east-gate' in Jer. xix. 2. It appears to be the valley-gate of Nehemiah, which, like the gate of the potteries, led immediately into the valley beneath. The valley-gate lay a thousand cubits to the north of the dung-gate. South of it came 'the gate of the fountain,' and south of that again the wall which enclosed 'the Pool of Shiloah by the king's garden,' and extended as far as 'the stairs that go down from the City of David.' Remains of these stairs have been discovered by Schick and Guthe a little to the east of the Pool of Siloam, as well as a little to the south of the Virgin's Spring (but within the line of the old wall), so that they must have run up the eastern slope of Zion, and ended not very far from the square in front of the water-gate. They led by 'the house of David,' which may possibly be 'the tower of David,' mentioned in Cant. iv. 4, as used for an armoury, and alluded to in Neh. iii. 19 under the same name. 'The king's garden' was, of course, attached to the palace.

Nehemiah elsewhere (ii. 14) calls the Pool of Siloam 'the king's pool,' probably because it adjoined 'the king's garden.' A little to the south of it, in the steep cliff that faced the interior of the wall, were 'the sepulchres of David,' the burying-place of the early kings of Judah. These were, doubtless, hewn out of the rock in a part of the royal gardens. When the old burying-place was filled, the successors of Hezekiah were entombed in the garden of Uzza, where Manasseh had built himself a palace; and a cuneiform text informs us that the Babylonian kings were similarly buried within the precincts of their palaces.

Southward of the royal sepulchres was 'the pool that was made,' which can only be the Lower Pool of Siloam. Traces of this have been found by Dr. Guthe, close to the so-called tree of Isaiah; and since the city wall here formed one of the walls of the reservoir, the latter must have been constructed after the walls had been built. 'The house of the mighty,' not far from the pool, was the barracks of David's body-guard, whose technical title was *Gibborim*, 'the mighty' (2 Sam. xxiii. 8). Their quarters were naturally in the vicinity of the palace.

The 'Gate of the Fountain' probably took its name from the fountain or well now called Bîr Eyyûb, to which it was the nearest outlet. The Bîr Eyyûb has long been identified with En-Rogel, 'the fullers' spring;' and the recent attempt to identify the latter with the Virgin's Spring, is due to the false supposition that the Stone of Zoheleth, or 'the serpent,' which stood by it (1 Kings i. 9), was the modern cliff of Zahweileh, on which the village of Siloah stands.

The Arabic word *Zahweileh*, however, has no etymological connection with the Hebrew *Zohelath*, and a cliff is not the same as a stone. The *Bir Eyyûb* is situated at the point where the extremities of the two valleys of the *Kidron* and of *Hinnom* meet together. In the level ground near it, on the banks of the *Kidron*, must have been 'the fullers' field,' the road to which would have led from the *Fountain-gate*. Here, then, must have been the spot where *Isaiah* met *Ahaz* and uttered the prophecy of *Immanuel* (*Isa.* vii. 3) and where later, the *Rab-shakeh*, or vizier of the Assyrian king, delivered *Sennacherib's* message to the servants of *Hezekiah*, who had 'gone forth to him' (*Isa.* xxxvi. 3). Here, also, according to *Isaiah*, was 'the end of the conduit of the upper pool.'

Immediately below the ascent to 'the armoury,' the wall turned suddenly to the north-east. North of this was the private house of the high-priest *Eliashib*, as well as the houses of some others of the priestly order. There was now a long stretch of wall without a gate, the descent into the valley of the *Kidron* being too steep to allow of one, and it was not until the wall had again turned that we hear of another gate. This was the *water-gate*, so named from the *Virgin's Spring*, near which it was. As the 'corner' or turn of the wall is represented by the remains of an angle uncovered by *Dr. Guthe* a little to the north of the *Virgin's Spring*, and turning sharply to the west, the *water-gate* would have faced north. The corner of the wall is consequently described as being over against 'the tower that lieth out from the king's high house that was by the court of the prison.' We know from *Jer.* xxxii. 2, that

the court of the prison was within the precincts of Solomon's palace on Moriah, and as the palace is stated to have been on 'high,' the tower must have stood below it.

After leaving the water-gate, the wall continued running towards the west until it met the south-eastern point of Ophel. Then it started at an angle in a north-westerly direction, skirting the eastern side of Ophel, and the extreme south-easterly part of Moriah. Here it was defended by 'the tower that lieth out,' and took a new turn to the north. Shortly afterwards it was pierced by the 'horse-gate,' which, as we may gather from 2 Kings xi. 16, 2 Chron. xxiii. 15, and Jer. xxxi. 40, was at the south-eastern extremity of the Temple-hill. In fact, the carriage-road to the temple and palace led through it, and Jeremiah implies that it was regarded as the northern boundary of the city of David, which, the prophet declares, should in the future become as holy as the Temple-hill itself. It was to protect this gate that 'the great tower that lieth out' must have been built, the foundations of which seem to have been discovered by Sir Charles Warren.

As the horse-gate marked the southern commencement of the upper city, the wall to the north of it was naturally restored by the priests, 'every one over against his house.' The next gate was the 'east-gate,' which is probably to be identified with the 'gate of Benjamin' of Zech. xiv. 10, since the latter was opposite to the corner-gate on the western side, and was named from the fact that it opened into the territory of Benjamin. It no doubt lay below 'the upper gate of Benjamin, which was by the house

of the LORD' (Jer. xx. 2). At the extreme north-eastern corner of the Temple-hill lived Nethinim and merchants, and here apparently was the gate of Miphkad or 'mustering.'

This description of the course of the walls is in entire harmony with Nehemiah's account of the procession of the two choirs on the day of their dedication. The first choir entered the city at the dung-gate, and then marching to the right made their way to the fountain-gate, 'which was over against them,' and so 'went up by the stairs of the city of David, even unto the water-gate eastward.' We may, perhaps, infer from this that the stairs began close to the water-gate. The second choir turned to the left, and accordingly passed 'from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall; and from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish-gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep-gate; and they stood still in the prison-gate.' The prison-gate is not noticed elsewhere, and may be the same as the horse-gate. If so, however, the portion of the wall which defended the eastern side of Ophel would have been left unvisited by either of the choirs, and consequently unconsecrated. The gate of Ephraim is also mentioned in 2 Kings xiv. 13, where it is stated that Jehoash king of Israel destroyed four hundred cubits of the wall of Jerusalem, from the gate of Ephraim to the corner-gate. This corner-gate may be the same as that spoken of in 2 Chron. xxvi. 9, which was protected by Uzziah with a tower, as well as the 'corner' or 'first' gate of Zechariah (xiv. 10); if so, it has probably nothing to do with the 'corner-

gate' of Jeremiah (xxxi. 38), at the southern extremity of the city, which is probably the fountain-gate of Nehemiah. In any case 'the gate of Ephraim' seems to be another name for the valley-gate.

Zion had originally been occupied by the isolated Jebusite fort called 'the stronghold of Zion,' which David was compelled to take before he could proceed to storm the Jebusite town on Mount Moriah. The fort, as is shown by the word used to denote it, stood in an otherwise uninhabited spot, and this explains how it was that the Israelitish king was able to build his new 'city of David' on the site (2 Sam. v. 9). It was, in fact, the outpost which protected the approach to the Jebusite city itself. So strong was the position of the latter, that its inhabitants had scoffed at David's preparations for a siege, and had fancied that it could be held by the blind and the lame against all attacks. This Jebusite taunt gave rise to the proverb: 'The blind and the lame shall not come into the temple,' which was afterwards erected in the very place where it had been uttered. Undeterred, however, by the natural strength of the city and the taunts of its defenders, David, after capturing the fort on Zion, penetrated into the city itself on the same day. The first to climb 'the gutter' and scale the walls of the Jebusites was Joab. The old inhabitants appear to have been allowed to live undisturbed in their former quarters throughout David's lifetime, while he and his Jewish subjects built a new town for themselves on the southern hill of Zion, since towards the end of his reign we find Araunah the Jebusite threshing wheat on his private threshing-floor, in the highest

part of Mount Moriah, where the temple afterwards stood. It was the union of the two cities—the old Jebusite city on Mount Moriah, and the new city of David on Zion—within a single line of fortifications, that created Jerusalem.

CHAPTER V.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

THE Book of Esther occupies a high place of honour among the Jews. Though placed among the *Ch'thubim* or Hagiographa, Maimonides asserted that when all the rest of the Old Testament Canon would pass away in the days of the coming of the Messiah, Esther and the Pentateuch would still remain. It is not unfrequently called *Megillah*, 'the volume,' instead of *Megillath Esther*, 'the volume of Esther,' and used generally to be written on a separate roll, which is read through at the Feast of Purim. That this high estimation of the book reaches back to an early date in the Jewish Church may be inferred from the fact that not only are there two Targums upon it, full of 'hagadic' amplifications, but the Septuagint also contains considerable apocryphal additions to it, which must have emanated from Alexandrian Judaism. Josephus, moreover, must have known of yet another apocryphal version of the history, since he gives various particulars which are not to be found in the Esther of the Apocrypha. Origen, in his letter to Africanus (*Op.* i. 14), endeavoured to defend the canonicity of the additions in the Septuagint, though he admitted that they did not exist in Hebrew. On the other hand, the peculiarity of the

book in avoiding any reference to religion, or even to the name of God, while the name of the Persian king occurs in it 187 times, seems to have induced Melito of Sardes and Gregory of Nazianzen to omit it in their lists of the Canon of Scripture; but it was doubtless to the apocryphal additions of the Septuagint that Athanasius referred when he (*Fest. Ep.* 39) classed Esther among the non-canonical books. Luther declared himself so hostile to Esther and the Second Book of Maccabees, that he 'wishes they did not exist; since they Judaize too much, and contain a good deal of heathen offensiveness.' The Council of Trent, however, following the example of Origen, declared the whole Book of Esther, as found in the Septuagint, to be canonical, though Sixtus of Siena subsequently still allowed himself to speak of the Greek additions as 'interpolated fragments.'

The earliest reference to the Book of Esther is in the Second Book of Maccabees (xv. 36), where the 13th of Adar is called 'the day before Mardocheus' day.' But the apocryphal additions in the Septuagint and Josephus carry the evidence for it considerably further back than the Second Book of Maccabees, which was not composed before the end of the second century B.C. The language of Esther resembles on the whole that of Ezra and Nehemiah, though more 'Chaldaisms' are to be found in it, and, as might be expected from the subject of the book, more 'Persisms' also. Thus in the first chapter we have the word *karpas*, 'cotton' (i. 6); *karpas* in modern Persian, *karpâsa* in Sanskrit, and *κάρπασος* in Greek; *partémim*, 'nobles' (i. 3, vi. 9, also Dan. i. 3), in Old Persian *fratama*, 'the first';

keïther, 'crown' (i. 11, ii. 17, vi. 8), the Old Persian *khshatram*, and Greek κίθαρις; while elsewhere in the book we meet with *pathshegen*, 'a copy' (iii. 14, iv. 8, viii. 13), in Persian *pati-thagana*, 'correspondent,' and *akhashtëranim*, 'royal' (not 'camels,' as in the A.V. viii. 10, 14), from the Persian *khshatram*, 'a crown,' and the adjectival termination *âna*. Some modern critics have assigned the date of the book to the age of the Ptolemies, but their grounds for doing so are unsatisfactory. It is true that the Greek version of the Septuagint closes with the postscript: 'In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemeus, [Philometor] and Cleopatra, Dositheus [Mattathiah], who said he was a priest and Levite, and Ptolemeus his son, brought this epistle of Phruræ [Purim], which they said was the same, and that Lysimachus, the son of Ptolemeus, that was in Jerusalem had interpreted it.' This, however, was evidently intended to give authority only to the Greek additions to Esther, which, it was pretended, had been translated at Jerusalem from Hebrew. Equally unsatisfactory in favour of a late date is the argument derived from the explanation of Persian customs in i. 13 and viii. 8, since the book was written for Jews, many of whom lived in distant provinces, far away from the Court and its regulations.

On the other hand, the minuteness of the details, and the frequent reference to events and persons which pre-suppose an acquaintance with Persia, go to show not only that the author lived in Persia—which indeed is admitted on all sides—but also that he lived before the overthrow of the Persian power. At the same time it is evident from the first verse of

the book that the reign of Xerxes was already over, as well as from the last verse but one, where it is stated that 'all' his acts were written in the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia. As we have seen, the character of the language of the book would tend to make it a little later than the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and we may therefore assent to the opinion of those commentators who place its composition towards the end of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus (B.C. 425).

Who the author may have been it is of course impossible to say. Clement of Alexandria and the Jewish Rabbi Aben Ezra suggested Mordecai, but, as Canon Rawlinson observes, 'if Mordecai had been the author, he would probaby have spoken of himself in the first person, at any rate sometimes, as do Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. He would also probably have dwelt less on his own greatness (ch. viii. 15 ; ix. 4 ; x. 2) and good qualities (x. 3).' Augustine ascribed the book to Ezra, the Talmud to 'the men of the Great Synagogue,' and the Pseudo-Philo to the high-priest Joiakim. But these are all mere guesses, two of which must certainly be wrong, since, as we have seen, there is clear proof that the author lived in Persia, which the high-priest Joiakim did not, while none of the phrases peculiar to Ezra are to be discovered in Esther.

But although the author can hardly have been Mordecai, we gather from ix. 20 that Mordecai had written an account of some at least of the events in which he had borne so prominent a part, and had circulated it among the Jews. This account formed a portion of the materials used by the author of the

book. What 'the book' was which is mentioned in ix. 32 is, unfortunately, a matter of dispute. The most received opinion is that it denoted the royal chronicles, which are elsewhere called 'the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia,' or 'the book of records of the chronicles.' In any case it was a work from which the author extracted part of his history, which was further supplemented by information that must have been derived from Esther herself.

Whether or not the royal archives are signified by 'the book' of ch. ix. 32, it is clear from other passages (ii. 23 ; vi. 1 ; x. 2) that they were laid under contribution. These archives were stored up in each of the three capitals of the empire, Susa, Babylon, and Ekbatana ; but it was those only of Susa which the author of the Book of Esther employed. They were afterwards used also by a Greek writer, Ktesias of Knidos, the physician of Artaxerxes Mnemon, from whom we learn that they were written on parchment, and contained not only annalistic records, but long narratives as well. This bears out what we are told in the sixth chapter of Esther that Ahasuerus amused himself during a sleepless night by hearing the State chronicles read.

It has been pointed out in a former chapter that Ahasuerus or Akhashverosh is the Hebrew form of the Persian Khshayârshâ, called Xerxes in Greek. Two kings of this name ruled over Persia ; but as the second reigned for only a couple of months, he cannot possibly be the Ahasuerus of Esther. The latter must be the famous monarch of Greek story,

whose huge armaments melted away before Greek valour at Salamis and Plataea. The character of Ahasuerus, too, agrees well with that of Xerxes I. Weak, vain, cowardly, and capricious, Xerxes I. was the only Persian monarch known to us who could have acted in the way described in the Book of Esther.

Xerxes has left inscriptions at Persepolis, at Elvend (near Ekbatana), and at Van in Armenia, which are couched in the same language as those of his father Darius. We learn from Herodotus (vii. 7, 8), that in the third year of his reign (B.C. 483), he convened a large assembly of the leading men in Persia, nominally to ask them whether they would advise him to undertake a war with Greece, but really to adopt their advice only if they were in favour of his doing so. The preparations for the war lasted nearly two years, and it was not until the spring of B.C. 480 that Xerxes marched from Sardes, and eventually occupied Athens. The battle of Salamis took place in the autumn of the same year, and was followed by the disgraceful flight of the Persian king, who must have reached Babylon and Susa a few months later. Mardonios was left in Greece with a picked body of men, but he, too, was beaten at Plataea in B.C. 479, and the war was transferred from Europe to Asia, the Greeks becoming in their turn the assailants. As Xerxes succeeded his father in B.C. 485, the battle of Plataea took place in his sixth year. After this, Greek history tells us but little about him. He married only one legitimate wife, his cousin Amestris. The marriage had been celebrated before the Greek expedition; the sons of

Amestris accompanied Xerxes to Greece, and all three had come to man's estate before the twentieth year of his reign. Indeed, Darius, the eldest of them, married directly after the return from the Greek campaign. At this time the greatest power at court is said to have been wielded by an eunuch, whose name is variously written Matakas, Natakas, and Atakas. Towards the end of his reign, Xerxes fell under the influence of Artabanos, and in the twenty-first year of his reign (B.C. 465) was murdered by two of his courtiers, at the instigation, as it was believed, of his wife Amestris, a woman of cruel and unscrupulous character. His inscriptions show that, like his father, he professed to be a monotheist, worshipping Ormazd only, and his abhorrence of idolatry was evidenced by his destruction of the great temple of Bel and other sanctuaries at Babylon, as a punishment for the assassination of the satrap Zopyros.

Of late years the historical credibility of the Book of Esther has been attacked by several critics. They have endeavoured to show on the one hand that its contents are at variance with what we know from Greek sources of the history of Xerxes, and on the other that they are inconsistent with probability. They ask what room there can be for either Vashti or Esther, since Xerxes had but one wife, Amestris, to whom he was married before the third year of his reign, and who continued to be his wife until the end of it? The answer, however, is simple. Amestris, it is true, was his only legitimate wife, but, like his predecessors and successors, he must have had others as well who were illegitimate. Of these we know

nothing from Greek sources ; from the Book of Esther we know of two (*cf.* ii. 17).

Again, it is asked how Mordecai can have been 'next unto king Ahasuerus,' since Artabanos, the commander of the body-guard, was the favourite and chief minister of the king? But, again, the answer is easy. It was only towards the end of the reign of Xerxes that Artabanos held this position, and we are not told how long Mordecai lived, or whether he retained the royal favour to the end of his life. Equally weak is the objection to the statement that Ahasuerus reigned over 127 provinces, since it is obvious that satrapies are not meant here, but minor divisions of the empire. That the empire really extended from Ethiopia to India is testified both by inscriptions and by the Greek writers.

If we turn to the objections that have been brought against the history on the ground of internal improbability, we shall find that most of them are fully met by the character of the king. Born in the purple, the weak and irresponsible Xerxes was accustomed to act like a spoilt child, who never realizes the results of its wishes and commands. Hence we can understand how he can have broken through all the rules of Oriental society and have summoned Vashti from the harem to a carouse ; how he could have given an edict to Haman for the massacre of the Jews, and a counter-edict afterwards to the Jews themselves ; and how he could have arranged a civil war among his subjects, so that 75,000 of them were slain. The latter number, however, is probably corrupt, since the Septuagint gives only 15,000, which is more in proportion to the 800 who were killed in Susa.

Other alleged improbabilities or inaccuracies can be shown to rest on a misunderstanding of the text or our ignorance of all the circumstances. Thus, we are told, it is incredible that so long a notice of his murderous intention as from nine to eleven months should have been given by Haman to the Jews (see iii. 12) without their quitting the kingdom, though it is nowhere stated that many of them did *not* do so; that Haman, instead of gratifying his grudge against Mordecai by causing him to be murdered at once, should have obtained an edict for the destruction of the whole nation to which he belonged, though we are utterly ignorant both of Haman's character and of the circumstances that protected Mordecai's life; or that Xerxes and Haman should be ignorant of Esther's Jewish origin and relationship to Mordecai, though there was no reason why they should have known it, considering the arrangements of an Eastern harem, and the fact that Esther was not the legitimate queen. This last fact will answer another objection: that Esther did not belong to one of the seven great Persian houses from which alone, outside the royal family, it was permissible for the king to take his wife.

A difficulty has been found in the long interval of time which elapsed between the divorce of Vashti and the marriage of Esther. This, however, is accounted for by the Greek campaign. The battle of Plataea did not take place till the sixth year of Xerxes; and it is in entire harmony with the king's character that he should have endeavoured to forget the disastrous defeat of his army in sensual indulgence at home. While the Greek war was going on

he had something else to occupy his mind, and was moreover absent from Susa during a considerable portion of the time.

We may pass over such examples of alleged improbability as the height of the stake on which Haman was impaled, or of alleged inaccuracies like certain proper names for which it is difficult to find a Persian etymology. Numbers and proper names are notoriously liable to corruption, and this may easily have been the case as regards the 50 cubits or 75 feet assigned to Haman's 'gallows.' Of equally little weight is the assertion based on ii, 5, 6,¹ that Mordecai must have been 120 years old, and Esther of a corresponding age, at the time of her marriage to Xerxes, since the person who is stated to have been carried into captivity with 'Jeconiah' can just as well be Kish as his great-grandson Mordecai.

On the other hand, it is difficult to read the Book of Esther with impartial eyes without being struck by its local colouring, its minuteness of detail, and its general agreement with historical facts. The very objection that has been brought against its authenticity from the long period of time which elapsed between the decree against Vashti and the choice of a new queen turns out to be a strong testimony in its favour. It is one of those undesigned coincidences which certify the genuineness of an ancient document better than a thousand arguments. A romancer would never have remembered that the third year

¹ 'Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity, which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.'

of Xerxes was the beginning of his preparations against Greece, and that from that moment to his sixth or seventh year he was either absent from Susa or occupied with Grecian affairs. Nor is it likely that a romancer or a mere Jewish legend would have assigned a name like that of Mordecai to their hero. Mordecai means 'belonging to Mero-dach,' just as Shimshai means 'belonging to the Sun-god,'¹ and was one of those names which were adopted by apostatising or religiously indifferent Jews from their Babylonian neighbours. So distinctively heathen a name would never have been selected for a Jewish champion by the 'hagadist' or moral romance-writer of a later day.

But the existence of the feast of Purim proves better than anything else the reality of the history which explains its origin. From the second century before the Christian era down to our own day we have contemporary evidence of its observance, and throughout that long period of time it has been kept by the Jewish people with an intensity of fervour which only the events recorded in the Book of Esther can explain or justify. Nay, more; the word Purim has no etymology in Hebrew, and must have been imported from abroad. The word is interpreted 'lot' in ch. iii. 7, and may have the same root as the Latin *pars* and *portio*. But it has not yet been met with in the fragments of the Old Persian language preserved in the inscriptions of Darius and his successors.

We have only to compare the Hebrew Book of

¹ See above, p. 27.

Esther with the apocryphal Greek additions to it, to see what a contrast there is between the genuine and the false. As soon as we pass to the Greek additions, we stumble at once on anachronisms and historical misstatements which betray the age to which they belong. Haman is changed into a Macedonian, Ahasuerus is made to call the Jews 'the elect nation,' and to wish that their enemies may descend into Hades or 'hell,' and Esther boasts that she 'had never eaten at the table of Haman.' Had the Hebrew Book of Esther been a Hagadah or religious romance of the Ptolemaic era, it also would have contained plenty of statements like these.

The history it records is told in a remarkably simple and straightforward way. It opens with the feast given by Xerxes at Susa to his nobles and princes in the third year of his reign (B.C. 483). The feast lasted for 180 days, and was followed by a public entertainment in the gardens of the palace which extended over a week. At the end of the carouse, Xerxes ordered his seven 'chamberlains' to bring 'Vashti the queen,' who had meanwhile been making 'a feast for the women in the royal house,' in order that she might be seen by the people and the princes. Vashti naturally refused to obey an order which outraged all the laws of Oriental society, and was given 'when the heart of the king was merry with wine.' Xerxes, exasperated at the refusal, asked the seven princes who sat next to him, and formed a sort of hereditary supreme council, what ought to be done to her. One of them replied that Vashti should be divorced, and public notification made of the fact. 'The saying pleased

the king,' and letters were sent into the various provinces of the empire, in the language and writing of each, enjoining that 'every man should bear rule in his own house.' The decree was not unnecessary even in Persia, where the head of the household was supposed to have despotic authority over it, since we learn from Herodotus that Atossa, the wife of Darius, 'completely ruled' him, and that Xerxes himself was in his later years under the influence of his wife Amestris.

It was not until about six years later, after the disastrous conclusion of the Greek campaign, that Xerxes determined to seek for some one to take the place of Vashti. A number of young girls were accordingly gathered together in the harem of the palace. Among them was a Jewish orphan, Hadasah, 'myrtle,' who was also known by another name, Esther. Esther is the Assyrian Istar, the Assyro-Babylonian form of the name of the goddess Ashtoreth, who, like the classical Venus, symbolised youth and beauty. The name had evidently been given her as a nick-name by her heathen neighbours because she was 'fair and beautiful,' and, like the name of Mordecai, may indicate that her family had but recently removed from Babylonia to Susa. Mordecai was her uncle and guardian, and his ready access to the harem of the palace shows that he was one of the chamberlains or eunuchs attached to it.

Twelve months after her admission into the harem, Esther was presented to Xerxes in the month Tebet, or December, in the seventh year of the king's reign. He was so much pleased with

her that he elevated her above the rest of her companions, and, setting the royal crown upon her head, 'made her queen instead of Vashti.' A marriage-feast was held, at which the king distributed gifts and remitted taxes in accordance with Persian custom.

Soon afterwards, a harem conspiracy was formed against Xerxes by two of the chamberlains, similar to that which was eventually the cause of his death. This conspiracy, however, was discovered by Mordecai, and revealed to Esther, who informed Xerxes about it. The conspirators were executed, and the name of Mordecai, whose relationship to Esther remained unknown, was entered in the State annals.

'After these things,' Haman, the son of Hammedatha, 'the Agagite,' was raised by Xerxes to the post of vizier, or chief minister. Haman is possibly the Persian Umana (the equivalent of the Greek Eumenes), and Hammedatha is certainly a compound of *dâta*, 'given,' but what 'the Agagite' means is wholly unknown. The term has, of course, nothing to do with Agag, king of Amalek, as Josephus and the Targum imagine. In accordance with custom and the king's express commandment, 'all the king's servants' saluted the new vizier, with the exception of Mordecai, who for some unexplained reason refused to pay any respect to him. Perhaps some light may be thrown on the matter by Tobit xiv. 10, which possibly contains a distorted tradition of the true relations between Haman and Mordecai: 'Remember, my son, how Aman handled Achiacharus that brought him up, how out of light he brought him into darkness, and how he rewarded him again :

yet Achiacharus was saved ; but the other had his reward : for he went down into darkness. Manasses gave alms, and escaped the snares of death which they had set for him ; but Aman fell into the snare and perished.'

Not content with avenging the slight on Mordecai, Haman determined to doom the whole Jewish race to death. He was, however, infected with the same superstition as that which led the Babylonians to distinguish between lucky and unlucky days, and to compile the multitudinous omen-tablets now in the British Museum, and he accordingly cast Purim or 'lots,' in order to discover a favourable day for his sanguinary design. For twelve whole months the process of casting the lots went on, from Nisan, or March, the first month of the twelfth year of Xerxes (B.C. 473), to Adar, the last. When the process was finished, Haman went to the king and offered him 10,000 talents of silver, or nearly £3,000,000, asking him at the same time for an edict ordering the Jews to be put to death throughout the empire, partly because they had different laws from those of other peoples, partly because they did not keep 'the king's laws.' Xerxes took the bribe, and the royal scribes were employed, on the 13th of Nisan of his thirteenth year, in writing letters to the satraps and governors, empowering their subjects to massacre the Jews and confiscate their property on the thirteenth day of the following Adar. The letters were sent by the posts from one end of the kingdom to the other.

Mordecai and his brethren were filled with dismay ; they put on sackcloth and ashes, and fasted and wept.

Esther was communicated with, and enjoined by Mordecai to perform her plain duty, by imploring the king to cancel his edict. After some reluctance Esther agreed, although it was death to enter the royal presence unsummoned, unless the king held out his golden sceptre as a token of pardon.

While the Jews fasted and prayed, Esther ventured to approach Xerxes. He received her kindly, and on promising to grant whatever she might ask, was invited to a banquet along with Haman. At the banquet Xerxes again desired to know what was her request, and was again invited with Haman to a second banquet. Esther still hesitated to ask the boon which her heart longed to utter. Haman meanwhile was lulled into false hopes. He determined to wreak his vengeance on Mordecai without delay, and at the suggestion of his wife, Zeresh, 'the golden,' caused a stake seventy-five feet high to be erected, whereon Mordecai should be impaled on the morrow. But God interfered on behalf of His chosen people. That night Xerxes could not sleep, and ordered the royal annals to be read to him for amusement. In these was an account of the discovery by Mordecai of the plot against his life. On hearing it the king inquired whether any reward had been given to Mordecai, and was told 'nothing.' At this moment Haman arrived 'to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.' Before he had an opportunity of doing so, however, Xerxes asked, 'What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?' and Haman, thinking that he himself was meant, proposed that royal honours should be

granted to him, and that he should ride on the king's horse clad in the king's robes and crown, with the noblest of the Persian princes walking before him and proclaiming the king's pleasure. Xerxes then informed the mortified vizier that Mordecai was the person to whom these extraordinary honours were to be granted, and ordered him to see them carried out, he himself, as vizier, and next in authority to the monarch, playing the part of herald. When the procession was over Haman returned home in the bitterness of mortification, 'mourning and having his head covered.'

Next came Esther's second banquet. In Haman's presence Xerxes asked her once more what her petition was, and this time she gave him her long-meditated answer, acknowledging that she was a Jewess, and begging of him the preservation of her nation, which had been sold to 'the adversary and enemy' the 'wicked Haman.' Xerxes retired for a few minutes to the garden, and during his absence Haman flung himself upon Esther's couch at her feet in an agony of supplication. In this position he was found by the king, who, accusing him of an attempt to force the queen, ordered him to be led out to immediate execution. He was impaled on the very stake he had erected for Mordecai, and his property confiscated, while Mordecai was appointed vizier in his place. But the edict against the Jews still remained in force, and Esther now went on to beg that it might be rescinded. Xerxes, however, professing that a royal decree could not be reversed, bade Esther and Mordecai send letters to the provinces of the empire, giving official permission to the

Jews to defend themselves if they were attacked. These letters were written and forwarded on the 23rd of Sivan, or May, every effort being made that they should reach the most distant parts of the kingdom before the fatal 13th of Adar arrived. When it came, the Jews, who were assisted by the Persian officials, slew large numbers of their enemies, among whom 500 fell at Susa, including the ten sons of Haman. At Esther's request another day of slaughter was granted to them in the latter city, where they killed 300 more of the citizens, and impaled the corpses of Haman's sons. While, therefore, the Jews in the provinces rested on the 14th of Adar, and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing, those at Susa did not hold their festival till the 15th. That they should have been allowed to make these public rejoicings for the slaughter of their fellow-subjects may at first sight appear strange, but it is paralleled by a similar fact among the Persians themselves: Once a year they too celebrated the murder of the false Bardes and his companions; and we are told by classical writers that, upon this occasion, a Magian did not dare to show himself in the streets. The Book of Esther concludes with a description of the establishment of the annual festival, which received the name of Purim from the lots thrown by Haman, and with a notice of the advancement and dignity of Mordecai, the new vizier of Persia.

The apocryphal additions to the book contained in the Septuagint version of it consist of five principal interpolations. The first is introductory, and gives Mordecai's pedigree, together with the assertion

that he was carried into exile by Nebuchadnezzar ; a dream that he had in the second year of ' Artaxerxes the Great ; ' an account of the conspiracy of the two eunuchs, and Mordecai's detection of it, and an explanation of Haman's hatred of him on account of this affair. Next comes a copy of the letter sent to the provinces by ' Artaxerxes,' as Xerxes is called throughout the Greek version of the book, at the request of Haman. The third interpolation is inserted after the fourth chapter, and includes prayers ascribed to Mordecai and Esther, and an expanded account of Esther's visit to the king. In her prayer she is made to excuse herself for being the wife of an uncircumcised king, and to deny having eaten or drunk anything at Haman's table. The fourth passage is a copy of the letter supposed to have been sent by Mordecai to the satraps and governors ; and the fifth is a supplement to the whole book. In this, Mordecai shows how his dream was fulfilled, thanks God for His mercies, and lays down the regulations to be observed at the Feast of Purim. In the English edition of the Apocrypha all the interpolations are combined together under the title, ' The rest of the chapters of the Book of Esther, which are found neither in the Hebrew nor in the Chaldee,' and are arranged in an unchronological order. The history of the arrangement is the following. After Jerome had translated the Hebrew book into Latin he added a translation of the interpolated passages found in the Septuagint, stating to what part of the book each belonged, and marking it out with an obelus. He first translated the supplemental portion of the

tenth chapter, together with the epilogue about Dositheus, quoted above (p. 102), and then proceeded to translate the introductory matter, which he stated to form the beginning of the Greek text. To this he added the other insertions of the Septuagint version. In later editions of the Vulgate the obeli and explanatory headings were omitted, and the several fragments came to be printed as chapters xi., xii., xiii., xiv., xv., and xvi., as if they were a continuous narrative supplementary to the Hebrew book. The Vulgate version has been the source of the English.

Thanks to the labours of Dr. Fritzsche, the history of the interpolations can now be traced. The original translation of the Hebrew book into Greek had nothing to do with them. They were subsequently introduced by another writer, whose work, however, was afterwards greatly changed and revised by a third hand. The original translation contained only a few unimportant additions and omissions, such as we meet with in other books of the Old Testament in the Septuagint text. Among the omissions the chief are the difficult clauses at the end of i. 22 and in viii. 10, 14, which are no doubt due to the translator's inability to understand them, the reference to 'the crown royal' in vi. 8, Esther's Jewish name Hadassah, and Mordecai's refusal to notice the presence of Haman (v. 9). The object of the first interpolater was plainly to give a religious character to a book the secular tone of which seems to have offended him; with this purpose he introduced the dream and prayers of Mordecai and the additions to the last chapter. He was, in fact, a 'Hagadist,' who, like the Hagadists of the Talmud,

inserted moral and religious tales and parables into the biblical narrative, and, like them, also endeavoured to explain difficulties and apparent omissions in the text. The letters pretended to have been written by Haman and Mordecai in the name of 'Artaxerxes' must in the first instance have been composed separately, since they are in unusually pure Greek, and contain little that is either religious or moral. Their incorporation into the text was due to a third hand. As Haman is made a Macedonian in the interpolated portion, we may accept the statement of the epilogue that the Greek text took its present shape in the fourth year of Ptolemy Philometor (B.C. 178).

The Book of Esther affords a useful illustration of a fact which is often forgotten. God's inspiration is not confined to a particular kind of literary work or a particular description of narrative. Holy Scripture contains examples of almost every sort of literary composition: all alike are consecrated in it. In the Book of Esther the Divine name does not occur even once; and we look in vain for references to religious observances—fasting perhaps excepted—and even to the peculiar institutions of the Jews. Nevertheless, secular as it seems to be in tone, it has been made an instrument through which God has revealed His will to us, and prepared the way for the work of Christ. Like the Song of Songs or the Book of Ecclesiastes, it teaches us the lesson that St. Peter had to learn: Nothing that God hath cleansed is 'common or unclean.'

APPENDIX I.

TRANSLATION OF THE GREAT INSCRIPTION OF DARIUS, THE SON OF HYSTASPES, ON THE ROCK OF BEHISTUN.

BEHISTUN is the Bagistana of classical writers, and means 'the god's place.' The inscription is written in three languages—Persian, Babylonian, and Amardian (falsely called Median), the language of Elam.

I. (1) I am Darius, the great king, the king of kings, king of Persia, king of the provinces, the son of Hystaspes [Vishtâspa], the grandson of Arsames, the Achæmenian.

(2) Says Darius the king: My father is Hystaspes, the father of Hystaspes was Arsames, the father of Arsames Ariyaramnes, the father of Ariyaramnes Teispes [Chaishpish], the father of Teispes was Achæmenes [Hakhamânish].

(3) Says Darius the king: On that account we are named Achæmenians; from ancient times have we been great, from ancient times has our family been kings.

(4) Says Darius the king: Eight of my family have been kings before me; I am the ninth; in two branches have we been kings.

(5) Says Darius the king: By the grace of Ormazd I am king: Ormazd gave me the kingdom.

(6) Says Darius the king: These are the provinces which have submitted to me; by the grace of Ormazd I became their king: Persia, Elam [Susania], Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, the maritime countries, Sepharad,

Ionia, Media, Armenia, Kappadocia, Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Chorasmia, Baktria, Sogdiana, Paropanisos [Hindu Kush], the Sakians (Scyths), the Sattagydes, Arachosia and Maka, in all twenty-three provinces.

(7) Says Darius the king : These are the lands which have submitted to me ; by the grace of Ormazd they became my servants, they brought me tribute ; what was commanded them by me night and day they fulfilled.

(8) Says Darius the king : In these provinces the man who was a friend, I have protected ; the man who was an enemy, I have punished severely. By the grace of Ormazd, this my law has been observed in these lands ; as it was commanded them by me, so was it done.

(9) Says Darius the king : Ormazd gave me the kingdom ; Ormazd brought me help, until I gained this kingdom ; by the grace of Ormazd I rule over this realm.

(10) Says Darius the king : This is what was done by me when I became king. One, Kambyes by name, son of Cyrus, of our family, was king here before me. This Kambyes had a brother, Bardes by name, of the same father and same mother as Kambyes. Afterwards Kambyes killed this Bardes. When Kambyes had killed Bardes, the people did not know that Bardes was killed. Then Kambyes went to Egypt. When Kambyes was gone to Egypt, the people became wicked ; then the lie grew in the provinces, in Persia as well as in Media and in the other provinces.

(11) Says Darius the king : There was a man, a Magian, Gomates by name ; from Paishyâuvâdâ he rose in rebellion ; a mountain, Arakadrish by name, is there from whence he rose. It was in the month Viyakhna [March], on the 14th day, that he rose ; he lied to the people and said : 'I am Bardes, son of Cyrus, the brother of Kambyes.' Then all the people revolted from

Kambyses, and went over to him, both Persia and Media and the other provinces. He seized the crown ; in the month Garmapada [July], on the 9th day he seized the crown. Then Kambyses died, having killed himself.

(12) Says Darius the king : This crown which Gomates the Magian took away from Kambyses, this crown was from of old in our family. Then Gomates the Magian deprived Kambyses both of Persia and of Media and of the other provinces ; he acted according to his own will ; he became king.

(13) Says Darius the king : There was no one, whether Persian or Median, or any one of our family, who could have dispossessed Gomates the Magian of the crown. The people feared him because of his severity. He killed many people who had known the former Bardes, [thinking] 'that it may not be known that I am not Bardes the son of Cyrus.' No one dared to say anything about Gomates the Magian until I came. Then I called upon Ormazd for help. Ormazd gave me aid ; it was in the month Bâgayâdish [February], on the 10th day, that, along with a few men, I killed this Gomates the Magian and those who were his chief adherents. There is a fortress Sikayauvatish by name, in Nisæa, a district of Media ; there I killed him ; I took from him the crown ; by the grace of Ormazd I became king ; Ormazd gave me the crown.

(14) Says Darius the king : The crown which had been taken from our family I restored ; I restored it in its place, as it had been before I made it again. The temples which Gomates the Magian had destroyed I restored, and I gave back to the people the sacred hymn and the ritual [?] and among the [Persian] clans what Gomates the Magian had taken away. I set again the people in their place, both Persia and Media, and the other pro-

vinces. As it was before I restored that which had been taken away ; by the grace of Ormazd I have done this ; I have laboured until I have again restored this our clan to its place ; as it was before I made it again by the grace of Ormazd, as if Gomates the Magian had never dispossessed our clan.

(15) Says Darius the king : This is what I did when I became king.

(16) Says Darius the king : When I had slain Gomates the Magian, a man, Assina by name, the son of Humbadaranna, rose up in Susiania ; he said to his people : ' I am king in Susiania.' Then the Susianians revolted ; they went over to this Assina ; he became king in Susiania. And also a man, Nidinta-Bel by name, the son of Ainairi, arose in Babylon : he lied thus to the people : ' I am Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidos.' Then all the people of the Babylonians went over to this Nidinta-Bel ; he seized the sovereignty in Babylon.

(17) Says Darius the king : Then I sent to Susiania ; this Assina was bound and brought to me ; I put him to death.

(18) Says Darius the king : Then I marched against Babylon, against this Nidinta-Bel, who said, ' I am Nebuchadnezzar.' The army of Nidinta-Bel held the Tigris ; there it was stationed, and was collected in ships. Then I divided my army into small groups. One part I set on camels, the other I placed on horseback. Ormazd brought me help ; by the grace of Ormazd we crossed the Tigris. Then I smote the army of Nidinta-Bel. On the 27th of the month Atriya-diya it was that we fought the battle.

(19) Darius the king says : Then I went to Babylon. I had not yet reached Babylon, when at a city named Zazana, on the Euphrates, that Nidinta-Bel, who called himself Nebuchadnezzar, came with his army, in order to

give battle to me. Then we fought a fight. Ormazd brought me help ; by the grace of Ormazd I smote the army of Nidinta-Bel. Part of them were driven into the water ; the water carried them away. It was on the 2nd day of the month Anâmaka [December] that we fought the battle.

II. (1) Says Darius the king : Then Nidinta-Bel fled with a few horsemen to Babylon. Then I went to Babylon. By the grace of Ormazd I took Babylon, and made this Nidinta-Bel prisoner. Therefore I put Nidinta-Bel to death in Babylon.

(2) Says Darius the king : While I was in Babylon, these provinces rebelled against me ; Persia, Susiania, Media, Assyria, Armenia, Parthia, Margiana, Sattagydia, and the Sakians.

(3) Says Darius the king : There was a man, Martiya by name, the son of Issainsakris, who dwelt in a town of Persia called Kuganâka. He arose in Susiania, and said thus to the people : 'I am Immanes, king of Susiania.'

(4) Says Darius the king : At that time I was near Susiania, and the Susians were [afraid] of me. The inhabitants of Susiania seized that Martiya who was their chief, and killed him.

(5) Says Darius the king : There was a man Phraortes by name, a Mede. He arose in Media. He said thus to the people : 'I am Kyaxares [Khshatrita], of the family of Uvakhshatara.' Then the Median people who lived in houses [or clans] revolted from me ; they went over to this Phraortes : he became king in Media.

(6) Says Darius the king : The Persian and Median army which was with me was small. Then I sent an army to Media. A Persian, Hydarnes by name, my servant, I made its commander. And I said thus to them : Go and slay this Median host which does not call itself

mine. Then Hydarnes marched with the army. When he came to Media, there is a town, Maru by name, in Media; there he fought a battle with the Medes. He who was the Median commander did not withstand [him]. Ormazd brought me help. By the grace of Ormazd, the army of Hydarnes utterly defeated that rebel host. On the 27th day of the month Anâmakâ [December] the battle was fought. There is a district in Media named Kampada; there my army stayed until I came to Media.

(7) Says Darius the king: An Armenian, Dadarses by name, my servant, I sent thereupon to Armenia. I said thus to him: Go and smite that rebel host which does not call itself mine. Then Dadarses marched. When he reached Armenia, the rebels gathered together, and marched against Dadarses, in order to give battle. There is a fortress, Zuza by name, in Armenia; there they fought a battle. Ormazd brought me help; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated that rebel host. On the 8th day of the month Thuravâhara [April] the battle was fought by them.

(8) Says Darius the king: For the second time the rebels gathered together and marched against Dadarses, in order to give battle. There is a fortress named Tigra, in Armenia; there they fought the battle. Ormazd brought me help; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated that rebel host. On the 18th day of the month Thuravâhara it was that the battle was fought.

(9) Says Darius the king: For the third time the rebels gathered together and marched against Dadarses to give battle. There is a fortress in Armenia, Uhyâma by name; there they offered battle. Ormazd brought help to me; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated that rebel host. It was on the 9th day of the month

Thaigarchish that they fought the battle. They slew 546 of the enemy, and took 520 prisoners. Then Dadarses awaited me until I came to Media.

(10) Says Darius the king: A Persian, Omises by name, my servant, I sent thereupon to Armenia. I said thus to him: Go and smite that rebel host which does not call itself mine. Then Omises marched. When he reached Armenia, the rebels gathered themselves together and came out against Omises to offer battle. There is a district in Assyria, Izzittu by name, there they offered battle. Ormazd brought help to me; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated that rebel host.

On the 15th day of the month Anâmaka it was that the battle was fought. They slew 2,024 of the enemy.

(11) Says Darius the king: For the second time the rebels gathered themselves together and came against Omises to offer battle. There is a district in Armenia, Autiyâra by name; there they offered battle. Ormazd brought help to me; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated the rebel host. On the last day of the month Thuravâhara the battle was fought. They killed 2,045 of the enemy, and took 2,559 prisoners. Then Omises waited for me there in Armenia until I came to Media.

(12) Says Darius the king: Then I marched from Babylon and went to Media. When I reached Media, at a city of Media, Kundurush by name, that Phraortes who called himself king of Media, came against me with his army to offer battle. Then we fought a battle. Ormazd brought me help; by the grace of Ormazd I utterly defeated the army of Phraortes. On the 26th day of the month Adukani it was that we fought the battle.

(13) Says Darius the king: Then this Phraortes fled

with a few horsemen to a district of Media, Rhages by name. Then I sent my troops against them. Phraortes was captured and brought to me. I cut off his nose, ears, and tongue; I put out his eyes; he was kept chained in my court; all the people saw him. Then I had him impaled in Ekbatana. The men who were his chief adherents I imprisoned in the citadel of Ekbatana.

(14) Says Darius the king: A man, Chitratakhma by name, a Sagartian, revolted against me. He said thus to the people: 'I am king of Sagartia,¹ belonging to the family of Uvakhshatara.' Then I despatched a Persian and Median army. A Mede, Takhmaspâda by name, was my servant; I made him commander of the army; I said thus to them: Go smite the rebel host which does not call itself mine. Then Takhmaspâda marched with the army, and fought a battle with Chitratakhma. Ormazd brought me help; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated the rebel host, and captured Chitratakhma and brought him to me. Then I cut off his nose and ears, and put out his eyes. He was kept chained in my court. Everyone saw him. Then I impaled him in Arbela.

(15) Says Darius the king: This is what I have done in Media.

(16) Says Darius the king: The Parthians and Hyrcanians revolted from me and went over to Phraortes. Hystaspes, my father, was in Parthia; the people left him and rebelled. Then Hystaspes took the troops which remained with him and marched out. There is a city in Parthia, Vispauzatish by name; there a battle was fought with the rebels. Ormazd brought me help;

¹ The Sagartia of the inscriptions is the country called Zagrti by the Assyrians, which gave its name to the Zagros mountains. It lay between Arbela on the west, and the Zagros range on the east, the Upper and Lower Zab being its northern and southern boundaries.

by the grace of Ormazd Hystaspes utterly defeated the rebels. It was on the 22nd day of the month Viyakhna that the battle was fought.

III. (1) Says Darius the king : Then I sent a Persian army to Hystaspes from Rhages. When this army was come to Hystaspes, Hystaspes marched out with his army. There is a city in Parthia, Patigrabana by name ; there he fought a battle with the rebels. Ormazd brought me help ; by the grace of Ormazd Hystaspes utterly defeated that rebel host. On the first day of the month Garmapada it was that the battle was fought. They slew 6,570 of the enemy and took 4,192 prisoners.

(2) Says Darius the king : Afterwards the province became mine. This is what I have done in Parthia.

(3) Says Darius the king : There is a country Margiana by name ; this revolted against me. A man, Frâda by name, a Margian, they made chief. Then I sent my servant, Dadarses by name, a Persian, who was satrap of Baktria, against him. I said thus to him : Go and smite that host which does not call itself mine. Then Dadarses marched with his army and fought a battle with the inhabitants of Margiana. Ormazd brought me help ; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated that hostile host. It was on the twenty-third day of the month Atriyaâdiya that the battle was fought. They slew 4,203 of the enemy, and took 6,572 prisoners.

(4) Says Darius the king : Afterwards the province became mine. This is what I have done in Baktria.

(5) Says Darius the king : There was a man, Vahyazdates by name, who dwelt in a city called Târavâ, in the district of Yutiya, in Persia. He arose for the second time in Persia. He said thus to the people : I am Bardes the son of Cyrus. Then the Persian people who belonged to the houses [or clans] of Elam [Anzan] revolted from me. They went over to Vahyazdates. He became king of Persia.

(6) Says Darius the king : Then I despatched the Persian and Median army which was with me. A Persian, Artavardiya by name, my servant, I made their commander. The rest of the Persian army marched after me to Media. Then Artavardiya marched with his army to Persia. When he reached Persia, at a city called Rakha in Persia, there that Vahyazdates, who called himself Bardes, was come against Artavardiya with his army to offer battle. Then they fought a battle. Ormazd brought me help ; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated that army of Vahyazdates. On the 12th day of the month Thuravâhara it was that the battle was fought.

(7) Says Darius the king : Then Vahyazdates fled with a few horsemen to Paishiyâvâdâ. From thence he set out a second time with an army against Artavardiya to offer battle. There is a mountain, Parga by name ; there they fought a battle. Ormazd brought me help ; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated that army of Vahyazdates. On the sixth day of the month Garmapada it was that the battle was fought, and they captured Vahyazdates ; and the men who were his chief adherents they captured also.

(8) Says Darius the king : Then I caused Vahyazdates and the men who were his chief adherents to be impaled in a town of Persia named Uvâdaichaya.

(9) Says Darius the king : This Vahyazdates, who called himself Bardes, sent an army to Arachosia, against a Persian, Vivâna by name, my servant, satrap of Arachosia. He made a man commander of it ; thus he said to them : 'Go smite Vivâna, and the army which calls itself that of King Darius.' Then the army which Vahyazdates had sent marched in order to offer battle to Vivâna. There is a fortress, Kâpishakânish by name ; there they fought a battle. Ormazd brought help to me ;

by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated the rebel host. On the 13th day of the month Anâmaka it was that the battle was fought.

(10) Says Darius the king : Thereupon for the second time the rebels gathered themselves together and marched against Vivâna to offer battle. There is a district, Gandumava by name ; there they fought a battle. Ormazd brought help to me ; by the grace of Ormazd my army utterly defeated the rebel host. It was on the 7th day of the month Viyakhna that the battle was fought.

(11) Says Darius the king : The man who was the commander of that army which Vahyazdates had sent against Vivâna, this commander retreated with a few horsemen. There is a fortress, Arshâda by name, in Arachosia, in the satrapy of Vivâna ; thither he retired. Then Vivâna followed him with his army on foot ; there he captured him and the men who had been his chief adherents, and put them to death.

(12) Says Darius the king : Then the province became mine. This is what was done by me in Arachosia.

(13) Says Darius the king : While I was in Persia and Media, the Babylonians revolted from me for the second time. A man arose, Arakha by name, an Armenian, the son of Khaldita. There is a district in Babylonia named Dubâla ; there he arose ; thus he lied to the people of Babylonia : ' I am Nebuchadnezzar the son of Nabonidos.' Then the people of Babylonia revolted from me and went over to that Arakha. He seized Babylon and became king in Babylon.

(14) Says Darius the king : Then I sent an army to Babylon. A Mede, Vindafrâ, by name, a servant, I made the commander of it. Thus I said to them : Go smite the people of Babylon which do not call themselves mine. Then Vindafrâ marched with his army to Babylon.

Ormazd brought me help ; by the grace of Ormazd Vindafrâ took Babylon, and smote the rebels in Babylon and took them prisoners. It was on the second day of the month Markazana that that Arakha, who called himself Nebuchadnezzar, was taken, and also the men who were his chief adherents were taken and put in chains. Then I ordered that Arakha and the men who were his chief adherents should be impaled.

IV. (1) Says Darius the king : That is what was done by me in Babylon.

(2) Says Darius the king : That which I did was always done through the favour of Ormazd. When the kings rebelled, I fought nineteen battles : by the grace of Ormazd I smote them ; nine kings I took alive. One was Gomates by name, a Median. He lied and said : I am Bardes, the son of Cyrus. He caused Persia to revolt. One was Assina by name, a Susianian. He lied and said : I am king of Susiania. He caused Susiania to revolt from me. One was Nidinta-Bel by name, a Babylonian. He lied and said : I am Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidos. He caused Babylon to revolt. One was Martiya by name, a Persian. He lied and said : I am Immanes, king of Susiania. He caused Susiania to revolt. One was Phraortes by name, a Mede. He lied and said : I am Kyaxares (Khshatrita), of the family of Uvakhshatara. He caused Media to revolt. One was Chitratakhma by name, a Sagartian. He lied and said : I am king of Sagartia, of the family of Uvakhshatara. He caused Sagartia to revolt. One was Fradâ by name, a Margian. He lied and said : I am king of Margiana. He caused Margiana to revolt. One was Vahyazdates by name, a Persian. He lied and said : I am Bardes, the son of Cyrus. He caused Persia to revolt. One was Arakha by name, an Armenian. He lied and said : I am Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidos. He caused Babylon to revolt.

(3) Says Darius the king : These nine kings I have taken in these battles.

(4) Says Darius the king : As for these provinces which revolted, the lie has caused them to revolt, so that they deceived the people. Afterwards Ormazd gave them into my hand. As was my will, so was it done unto them.

(5) Says Darius the king : Thou who shalt be king hereafter beware of all lying : punish severely the man who lies, if thou desirest : 'My land shall remain uninjured.'

(6) Says Darius the king : What I did, that I did always by the grace of Ormazd. Do thou, who shalt hereafter read this inscription, believe that which I have done ; consider it not a lie.

(7) Says Darius the king : May Ormazd be my witness that it is true and no lie. I have done it of a surety.

(8) Says Darius the king : By the grace of Ormazd much else has been done by me which is not written in this inscription. For this reason it is not written, that it may not seem too much to him who hereafter reads this inscription, that he may not disbelieve what I have done, may not consider it a lie.

(9) Says Darius the king : The kings who went before me, while they lived, have not done what I have certainly accomplished by the grace of Ormazd.

(10) Says Darius the king : Let this tablet make thee believe what I have done. Say : 'It is so,' and conceal it not. If thou concealest not this record, and declarest it to the people, then may Ormazd be thy friend, may thy family be numerous, and mayest thou live long.

(11) Says Darius the king : If thou concealest this record, and declarest it not to the people, then may Ormazd slay thee, may thy family perish.

(12) Says Darius the king : That which I have ever

done, I have done by the grace of Ormazd. Ormazd and the other gods that may exist brought me help.

(13) Says Darius the king : For this reason Ormazd and the other gods that may exist brought me help, because I was not wicked, nor a liar, nor a tyrant, neither I nor my family. According to the law I have governed, and have done no wrong to the man who obeys the law or to the judge. I have done good to him who has helped our clan ; I have severely punished him who was wicked.

(14) Says Darius the king : Thou who shalt be king hereafter, punish severely him who is a liar or a rebel (?), who has not a friendly intent (?).

(15) Says Darius the king: Thou who shalt hereafter see this tablet which I have written, and these figures, destroy them not, but preserve them as long as thou livest.

(16) Says Darius the king : If thou seest this tablet and these figures, and dost not injure them, but preservest them for me as long as thy family endures, may Ormazd be thy friend, may thy family be numerous. Live long, and may Ormazd prosper all that thou doest.

(17) Says Darius the king: If thou seest this tablet and these figures, and injurest them, and preservest them not for me as long as thy family endures, may Ormazd smite thee, may thy family come to nought, may Ormazd overthrow all that thou doest.

(18) Says Darius the king: These are the men who were there at the time when I slew Gomates the Magian, who called himself Bardes. At that time these men helped me as my adherents : Vindaphernes by name, the son of Vayaspares, a Persian ; Otanes by name, the son of Thukhra, a Persian ; Gobryas by name, the son of Mardonios, a Persian ; Hydarnes by name, the son of Megabignes, a Persian ; Megabyzos (Bagabuksha) by

name, the son of Dadyes, a Persian ; Ardumanes by name, the son of Vahauka, a Persian.

(19) Says Darius the king : Thou who shalt be king hereafter, protect always these men.

(20)¹ Says Darius the king : By the grace of Ormazd I have made inscriptions (or books) elsewhere in the Arian (Persian) language which did not exist before. And (I have made) a text (?) of the law and additions to the law, and a title (?) and a translation (?). And it was written, and I sent it abroad. Then I restored the old books among all the provinces, and the people obeyed (?).

V.² (1) Says Darius the king : This is what I did up to the . . . year after I became king. There is a district called (Ah)vaza, in Susiania. It rebelled against me. A man, (Um)maima by name, a Susian, the people of Susiania made their commander. Then I sent an army to Susiania. A Persian, Gobryas by name, my servant, I made its commander. Then marched Gobryas with the army to Susiania, and fought a battle with those rebels. Then my army captured this (Um)maima and his property and his . . . and he was led before me [and I kept him chained in my palace] ; then the land became mine. Afterwards in a district . . . by name, there I impaled him.

(2) Says Darius the king : Then the land became mine, and the other lands which Ormazd has given into my hands. I conquered them by the grace of Ormazd : as was my will, so was it done unto them.

(3) Says Darius the king : Thou who hereafter shalt read this tablet [may Ormazd save thee and give thee] life.

¹ This section is found only in the Amardian version, and not in either the Persian or the Babylonian.

² This and the following sections, which are supplementary to the main inscription, are found only in the Persian version. The text has been restored in several places by Dr. Oppert.

(4) Says Darius the king : Afterwards the Sakians revolted against me. Then I marched against the land of the [Amyrgian] Sakians, and those who wear a pointed [helmet] and who [dwell by the Kaspian Sea]. Then I marched to the sea. There is a district . . . by name ; then I crossed the sea on a bridge (?) ; I fought a battle against the Sakians ; I killed some and captured others by the grace of Ormazd. They were led before me, and . . . Then I captured their chief, Sakunka by name, and I put him to death. There is [a place . . . by name, there] I appointed another chief according to my will. Then the land became mine.

(5) Says Darius the king : . . . not Ormazd . . . if by the grace of Ormazd . . . I did.

(6) Says Darius the king : He who fears Ormazd, [Ormazd will give him] life. . . .

Above the figures of the Pretenders :—

I am Darius, the great king, the king of kings, king of Persia, king of the provinces, son of Hystaspes, grandson of Arsames, the Achæmenian. Says Darius the king : My father was Hystaspes, the father of Hystaspes was Arsames, the father of Arsames was Ariyaramnes, the father of Ariyaramnes was Teispes, the father of Teispes was Achæmenes. Says Darius the king : For this reason are we named Achæmenians ; from ancient times have we been great, from ancient times has our family been kings. Says Darius the king : Eight of my family have been kings before me : I am the ninth : in two branches have we been kings.

Over the first figure :—

This Gomates, the Magian, lied and said : I am Bardes, the son of Cyrus ; I am king.

Over the second figure :—

This Assina lied and said : I am king of Susiania.

Over the third figure :—

This Nidinta-Bel lied and said : I am Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidos ; I am king of Babylon.

Over the fourth figure :—

This Phraortes lied and said : I am Kyaxares, of the family of Uvakhshatara ; I am king of Media.

Over the fifth figure :—

This Martiya lied and said : I am Immanes ; I am king of Susiania.

Over the sixth figure :—

This Chitratakhma lied and said : I am king of Sagartia, of the family of Uvakhshatara.

Over the seventh figure :—

This Vahyazdates lied and said : I am Bardes, the son of Cyrus ; I am king.

Over the eighth figure :—

This Arakha lied and said : I am Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidos : I am king of Babylon.

Over the ninth figure :—

This Frâda lied and said : I am king of Margiana.

Over the tenth figure :—

This is Sakunka the Sakian.

APPENDIX II.

INSCRIPTION OF XERXES AT PERSEPOLIS.

A GREAT god is Ormazd, who created this earth, who created that heaven, who created man, who created blessings for man, who has made Xerxes king, sole king of many kings, sole lawgiver among many lawgivers.

I am Xerxes the great king, the king of kings, the king of the lands where many languages are spoken, the king of this wide earth, far and near, the son of King Darius the Archæmenian.

Says Xerxes the great king : By the grace of Ormazd I have made this portal, which is sculptured with the representations of all peoples. There are also many other beautiful buildings in Persia which I have made and which my father made. All such buildings as appear beautiful we have made by the grace of Ormazd.

Says Darius the king : May Ormazd protect me and my empire, and my work and my father's work ; may Ormazd protect it all.

APPENDIX III.

MONTHS OF THE JEWISH YEAR AFTER THE EXILE.

ASSYRIAN NAME.	MEANING.	JEWISH NAME.	APPROXIMATE MONTH.
1. Nisannu	(Month of) opening	Nisan	March
2. Airu	The bright	Iyyar	April
3. Sivanu	(Month of) brick-making	Sivan	May
4. Duzu	(Month of the Sun-god)		
	Tammuz	Tammuz	June
5. Abu		Ab	July
6. Ululu	(Month of) the spirit	Elul	August
7. Tasritu	(Month of) the Sanctuary	Tisri	September
8. Arakh-savna	The eighth month	Marchesvan	October
9. Kisilivu		Chisleu	November
10. Tabitu	The good (month)	Tebet	December
11. Sabatu		Sebat	January
12. Addaru	The dark (month)	Adar	February
Arakh-makru	Incidental month	Ve-Adar	

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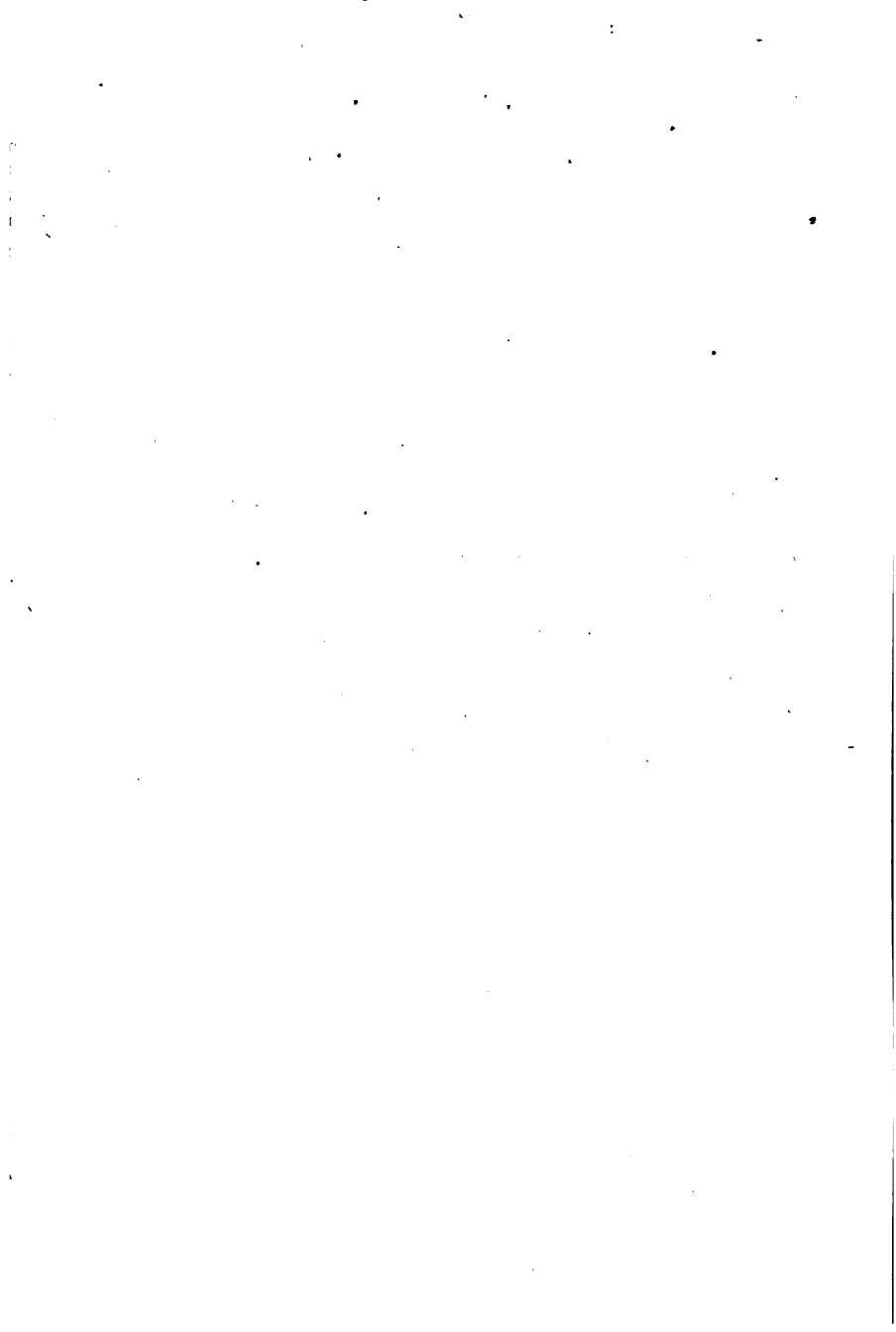
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